Contents of the Collection

Volume 1
Dasein, Authenticity, and Death

Volume 2
Truth, Realism, and the History of Being

Volume 3
Art, Poetry, and Technology

Volume 4
Language and the Critique of Subjectivity

Heidegger Reexamined

Volume 3

Art, Poetry, and Technology

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Series Introduction

Martin Heidegger is undeniably one of the most influential philosophers of the twenieth century. His work has been appropriated by scholars in fields as diverse as philosophy, classics, psychology, literature, history, sociology, anthropology, political science, religious studies, and cultural studies.

In this four-volume series, we've collected a set of articles that we believe represent some of the best research on the most interesting and difficult issues in contemporary Heidegger scholarship. In putting together this collection, we have quite deliberately tried to identify the papers that engage critically with Heidegger's thought. This is not just because we wanted to focus on "live" issues in Heidegger scholarship. It is also because critical engagement with the text is, in our opinion, the best way to grasp Heidegger's thought. Heidegger is a notoriously difficult read—in part, because he is deliberately trying to break with the philosophical tradition, in part, because his way of breaking with the tradition was often to coin neologisms (a less sympathetic reader might dismiss it as obfuscatory jargon), and, in part, because Heidegger believed his task was to provoke his readers to thoughtfulness rather than provide them with a facile answer to a well-defined problem. Because of the difficulties in reading Heidegger, however, we believe that it is incumbent upon the commentator to keep the matter for thought in the forefront—the issue that Heidegger is trying to shed light on. Without such an engagement in the matter for thought, Heidegger scholarship all too often devolves into empty word play.

So, the first and most important criterion we've used in selecting papers is that they engage with important issues in Heidegger's thought, and do so in a clear, non-obfuscatory fashion. Next, we have by and large avoided republishing articles that are already available in other collections of essays on Heidegger. We have made exceptions, however, particularly when the essay is located in a volume that would easily be overlooked by Heidegger scholars. Finally, as our primary intent was to collect and make readily available work on current issues and problems arising out of Heidegger's thought, we have tried to select recent rather than dated articles.

In selecting themes for each volume, we have, in general, been guided by the order in which Heidegger, over the course of his career, devoted extended attention to the problems involved. Thus, the first volume con-

tains essays focusing on Dasein—the human mode of existence—and "existential" themes like authenticity and death, because these were prominent concerns in the years leading up to and immediately following the publication of *Being and Time* in 1927. The second volume centers on Heidegger's account of truth, and his critique of the history of philosophy, because these were areas of extended interest in the 1930s and 1940s. The third volume is organized around themes indigenous to the 'late' Heidegger—namely, Heidegger's work on art, poetry, and technology.

But this is not to say that the volumes are governed by a strict notion of periods in Heidegger's work. In the past, it has been commonplace to subdivide Heidegger's work into two (early and late) or even three (early, middle, and late) periods. While there is something to be said for such divisions—there is an obvious sense in which *Being and Time* is thematically and stylistically unlike Heidegger's publications following the Second World War—it is also misleading to speak as if there were two or three different Heideggers. The bifurcation, as is well known, is something that Heidegger himself was uneasy about[1], and scholars today are increasingly hesitant to draw too sharp a divide between the early and late. So while the themes of the first three volumes have been set by Heidegger's own historical course through philosophy, the distribution of papers into volumes does not respect a division of scholarship into early and late. We have found instead that the papers relevant to an 'early Heidegger' issue often draw on Heidegger's later work, and vice versa.

The last volume in the series is organized less by Heidegger's own thematic concerns than by an interest in Heidegger's relevance to contemporary philosophy. Given mainstream analytic philosophy's preoccupation with language and mind, however, this volume does have two thematic centers of gravity—Heidegger's work on the essence of language, and his critique of modernist accounts of subjectivity.

In its focus on Heidegger's relevance to ongoing philosophical concerns, however, volume four merely makes obvious the intention of the series as a whole. In his 1925–1926 lecture course on logic, Heidegger bemoaned the fact that people "no longer philosophize from the issues, but from their colleague's books."[2] In a similar way, we believe that Heidegger is deserving of attention as a philosopher only because he is such an excellent guide to the issues themselves. We hope that the papers we have collected here demonstrate Heidegger's continuing pertinence to the most pressing issues in contemporary philosophy.

NOTES

[1] Writing to Richardson, Heidegger noted: "The distinction you make between Heidegger I and II is justified only on the condition that this is kept constantly in mind: only by way of what [Heidegger] I has thought does one gain access to what is to-be-thought by [Heidegger] II. But the thought of [Heidegger] I becomes possible only if it is contained in [Heidegger] II." William J. Richardson, "Letter to Richardson," in *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1963), 8.

[2] *Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit, Gesamtausgabe* 21 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1995), 84.

Volume Introduction

During winter semester 1934–1935, Heidegger offered his first lecture course devoted to the work of the poet Hölderlin.[1] Over the next three decades, Heidegger taught several more courses devoted to Hölderlin and poetry, and presented a number of lectures on poetry and art.[2] In the summer of 1934, the semester before the Hölderlin course, Heidegger first noted the rise of a technology which "is more than the domination of tools and machine," but "rather has its fundamental significance in man's changed position in the world."[3] In two of Heidegger's most influential essays—"Origin of the Work of Art" and "The Question Concerning Technology"—it becomes clear that Heidegger's thought on poetry and art is intimately linked with his reflections on technology. Indeed, in "The Question Concerning Technology," he wondered hopefully whether poetry and the arts could "expressly foster the growth of the saving power" that could save us from the dangers of technology.[4] Throughout his later works, Heidegger returned repeatedly to these themes of the essence and danger of technology and the world-transforming power of art and poetry.

Why is the late Heidegger so preoccupied with this sustained and interwoven reflection on the arts and technology? In volume two, we presented papers dealing with Heidegger's account of the "essence of truth" as unconcealment, and Heidegger's reconstruction of western history as a history of "the essential beginning and the transformation of the essence of the truth of beings."[5] "The 'meaning' of history," Heidegger claims, "is the essence of truth, in which at any time the truth of a human epoch is founded."[6] This is because historical acts take place within the space opened up by an unconcealment of being.[7] So, for Heidegger, the most fundamental events that occur in history are changes in the basic ways that we understand things, changes brought about by a new unconcealment of being. The turn to works of art, as Klaus Held shows, allows Heidegger to avoid a residual subjectivism implicit in *Being and Time*—namely, the view that disclosedness depends on Dasein. Thus, Held suggests, the late Heidegger's turn to the arts should be seen as a more refined phenomenology of world disclosedness.

Thus, Heidegger's interest in art and poetry is driven by the belief that they can play a privileged role in instituting and focusing changes in the prevailing unconcealment of being. As he noted in a 1935 lecture course,

"Unconcealment occurs only when it is achieved by work: the work of the word in poetry, the work of stone in temple and statue, the work of the word in thought, the work of the polis as the historical place in which all this is grounded and preserved."[8] This view was later explained and expanded in "The Origin of the Work of Art":

> Truth, as the clearing and concealing of beings, happens in being composed. All art, as the letting happen of the advent of the truth of beings, is as such, in essence, poetry. The essence of art, on which both the artwork and the artist depend, is the setting-itself-into-work of truth. It is due to art's poetic essence that, in the midst of beings, art breaks open an open place, in whose openness everything is other than usual. . . . What poetry, as clearing projection, unfolds of unconcealment and projects ahead into the rift-design of the figure, is the open region which poetry lets happen, and indeed in such a way that only now, in the midst of beings, the open region brings beings to shine and ring out.[9]

Works of art can show us a new way of understanding what is important and trivial, central and marginal, demanding of our attention and concern. They do this by giving us a work which can serve as a cultural paradigm. As such, the work shapes a culture's sensibilities by collecting the scattered practices of a people, unifying them into coherent and meaningful possibilities for action, and epitomizing this unified and coherent meaning in a visible fashion. The people, in turn, by becoming attuned to the artwork, can then relate to each other in the shared light of the work. Thus, the work of art is something to which we can be drawn, and, in being drawn to it, our sensibilities can be shaped. As we become attuned to the sense for the world embodied in a work of art, our ways of being disposed for everything else in the world can change also. Thus, Heidegger can say, "poetry is the saying of the unconcealment of beings."[10] We've included Charles Guignon's excellent exposition of Heidegger's alethic view of the work of art.

Of course, artworks are not the only things that can embody a way of making sense of the world. Modern technologies also do this, and, as we become more and more at home with technology, we find ourselves drawn into a way of opening up the world that Heidegger believes poses a profound threat. In the technological age, the old paradigms break down and are replaced by a sense for the world that is no longer visible. Heidegger argues that, in the history of the West, there have been a series of things to serve as the shared source of meaning—that is, we've been attuned by a variety of different things in a variety of different ways. What is unique about this moment in history is that there is no candidate to step into the position of shared source of meaning and value.

But this does not mean that our culture lacks a shared attunement for the world. We are being invisibly attuned, Heidegger claims, by modern technology. Michel Haar explains in some detail this idea of attunement, and discusses the attunement that prevails in the technological world. We can say, by way of introduction, that Heidegger believes that technology attunes us to a world in which everything that shows up is lacking in any inherent significance, use, or purpose. Heidegger's name for the way in which objects appear and are experienced in the technological world is "resource," by which he means objects that are removed from their natural conditions and contexts and reorganized in such a way as to be completely available, flexible, interchangeable, and ready for employment in an indefinite variety of manners (see "The Question Concerning Technology"). In the technological age, even people are reduced from modern subjects with fixed desires and deep immanent truths, to "functionaries of enframing".[11] In such a world, nothing is encountered as really mattering, that is, as having a worth that exceeds its purely instrumental value for satisfying transitory urges.

In such a world, we lose the sense that our understanding of that by virtue of which things used to matter—a shared vision of the good, the correct way to live, justice, etc.,—is grounded in something more than our willing it to be so. As we get in tune with the mood of the technological age, things increasingly show up as lacking any set purpose or inherent value, and instead appear as ready to be taken up in any way that we choose. If all we encounter are resources, Heidegger worries, it is not just our lives, but all the things with which we deal, that will lose weightiness and importance. All things become equally trivial, equally lacking in goodness, rightness, and worth. The decisive question for our age, then, is "whether we let every being weightlessly drift into nothingness or whether we want to give a weightiness to the thing again and especially to ourselves; whether we become master over ourselves, in order to find ourselves in essence, or whether we lose ourselves in and with the existing nothingness."[12]

Heidegger initially hoped that art could play a role in answering this question. Later in his life, however, he became increasingly skeptical about the ability of art to release us from the technological understanding of being. This is because the way technology attunes us to the world makes it difficult for us to be drawn to artworks in the right way. Art and poetry, in a technological age, become mere aesthetic experiences. The result is that "the world age of technological-industrial civilization conceals within itself an increasing danger that is all too rarely considered in its foundations: the supporting enlivening of poetry, of the arts, of reflective thinking cannot be experienced any more in their self-speaking truth."[13] See Friedrich von Herrmann's paper for a more detailed elaboration of Heidegger's account

of the connection between art and technology.

Nevertheless, Heidegger continued to return to the poetry of Hölderlin for insight into a way of practicing non-technological dwelling in the world. This reliance on Hölderlin had an inescapably political dimension, as Heidegger hoped to discover in Hölderlin's poetry a new destiny for the German people. Heidegger's political engagement, in its most authentic form, was an outgrowth of his opposition to technology. Richard Polt shows that Heidegger's view of politics was a metaphysicalization of politics. Polt returns to Heidegger's formative work, *Beitraege*, written in the years immediately following Heidegger's disastrous political involvement with National Socialism. Julian Young, too, illustrates Heidegger's metaphysical politics through an exploration of Heidegger's wartime Hölderlin lectures. Young argues that these lectures show clearly Heidegger's attempt at articulating a way of being appropriate to the destiny of the German people.

From his study of Hölderlin, Heidegger developed the notion of a poetical dwelling of mortals, before the divinities, between the earth and the sky. The four-fold of earth, sky, mortals, and divinities is a central topic of the later Heidegger, but most discussions of the four-fold struggle to say anything sensible about it that stays true to Heidegger's text. James Edwards offers one of the clearest elaborations of the four-fold, and shows how it aids us in the search for a non-technological mode of poetic dwelling.

One element of the four-fold—the divinities—is more neglected and less understood than the rest. Heidegger's invocation of the divinities as saving powers, like his famous observation that 'only a god can save us,'[14] is only the explicit manifestation of a theme that is never far from the surface in Heidegger's work: God, and philosophy's relation to theology. But for every constructive appeal to God or the divine in Heidegger's works, one can also find a pointed critique of traditional theology or onto-theology (which Heidegger believes has contaminated both metaphysics and religion). Not surprisingly, in light of such writings, commentators have attributed views to Heidegger ranging from polytheism to atheism (and everything in between). We've included just one paper devoted to Heidegger's thought on God—Laurence Hemming's scholarly review of the question.

Learning to live receptively with the divinities and the rest of the four-fold, Heidegger believes, helps us to achieve a "free relationship"[15] to technology. In "Heidegger on Gaining a Free Relation to Technology," Hubert Dreyfus explains that both the free relationship and technology need to be understood in ontological terms—that is, in terms of the way the being of everything we encounter in the world is disclosed. As Dreyfus notes, Heidegger argues that fostering the free relationship requires that we learn a changed receptivity to the world, namely, 'releasement' or '*Gelassenheit.*'

Reiner Schurmann offers an illuminating exploration of the idea of releasement rooted in Heidegger's reading of Meister Eckhart. By way of summary, however, we can note that, as Heidegger explained, releasement is the "attitude of the simultaneous affirmation and refusal of the technological world." That is, it is the ability to "simultaneously say 'yes' and 'no' to technological objects," through which "our relation to the technological world becomes simple and calm in a wondrous way."[16]

It is not clear, however, what place Heidegger thinks technological devices can hold in a life that has achieved such a simultaneous affirmation and refusal of technology. In "Highway Bridges and Feasts," Hubert Dreyfus and Charles Spinosa argue that Heidegger leaves open the possibility of attaining a free relation even while technological devices continue to play a central role in our lives. Albert Borgmann, by contrast, argues that overcoming technology is only possible by allowing our lives to be oriented by focal practices and things—things which cannot focus our lives if they withdraw in the way that technological devices are designed to withdraw.

Heidegger also reflected on the possibility of a turning (*Kehre*), or an event (*Ereignis*) in which the world is brought out of a technological configuration, and things are brought into their own, appropriate way of holding sway:

> What we experience in en-framing [the technological mode of being] as the constellation of being and man throughout the modern technological world is a prelude to what is called the event of appropriation (*Ereignis*). This event, however, does not necessarily persist in its prelude. For in the event of appropriation the possibility arises that it may overcome the mere dominance of en-framing to turn it into a more original appropriating. Such a transformation of en-framing into the event of appropriation, by virtue of that event, would bring the appropriate recovery—appropriate, hence never to be produced by man alone—of the technological world from its dominance back to servitude in the realm by which man reaches more truly into the event of appropriation.[17]

Of all the unclear notions in Heidegger's later work, few are as obscure as *Ereignis*. But this much is clear—under this term, Heidegger attempts to radicalize his previous thought on being, and arrive at that on the basis of which being is given and an understanding of being comes to prevail. Hans Ruin offers a helpful preliminary appraisal of *Ereignis* by connecting it to the the account of temporality in Heidegger's earlier work (in particular to the idea of the *Augenblick*). Thomas Sheehan, too, turns to the early Heidegger for clarification, but he takes a rather different tack in interpreting *Ereignis*. For Sheehan, the relevant texts for sorting out this notion

are Heidegger's interpretations of Aristotle, and his appropriation of the Aristotelean concepts of *dynamis* and *kinesis*. *Ereignis*, Sheehan argues, should be understood as movement.

The volume includes two more general reflections on the late Heidegger's thought. Gianni Vattimo's short piece suggests that Heidegger's elevation of the position of art and poetry is part and parcel of the destruction of metaphysics, and consists in an effort at overcoming the harmful priority accorded to epistemology in modern philosophy. Joseph Fell examines Heidegger's elevation of poetry and art and the critique of metaphysical thought. These characteristic elements of the late Heidegger are often taken as betraying an anti-rationalism and nihilism on Heidegger's part. Fell argues, however, that it is the nihilism of the technological age that threatens reason, and that the late Heidegger's views are perhaps the best hope of saving and regrounding reason in the face of the dominance of calculative thought.

NOTES

[1] *Hölderlins Hymnen "Germanien" und "Der Rhein," Gesamtausgabe* vol. 39 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1989).

[2] These lectures include "The Origin of the Work of Art," ". . . Poetically Man Dwells . . . ," and "The Nature of Language," among many others.

[3] *Über Logik als Frage nach der Sprache, Gesamtausgabe* vol. 38 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1998), p. 143.

[4] "The Question Concerning Technology," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 35.

[5] *Parmenides*, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 166.

[6] Ibid., 56.

[7] *Die Geschichte des Seyns, Gesamtausgabe* 69 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1998), 162 ff.

[8] *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 191.

[9] "The Origin of the Work of Art," in Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, revised and expanded, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), p. 197.

[10] Ibid., 198.

[11] "Das Gestell," in *Gesamtausgabe,* vol. 79 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1991), 30.

[12] *Gesamtausgabe,* vol. 44 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann), pp. 193–194.

[13] "Ein Grusswort für das Symposion in Beirut, November 1974," in *Reden, Gesamtausgabe* vol. 16 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann), 741, and "Grusswort anlässlich des Erscheinens," der Zeitschrift Riso 500 (19 November 1974): 743.

[14] Martin Heidegger, "'Only a God Can Save Us': *Der Spiegel*'s Interview with Martin Heidegger," in *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Wolin (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), 107.

[15] "The Question Concerning Technology," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 311.

[16] "Gelassenheit," in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 16 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann), 526.

[17] "The Principle of Identity," in *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 37 (translation modified).

Aesthetics and the End of Epistemology

GIANNI VATTIMO / *TURIN*

Is there a clear sense in which works of art, as proposed in the French formulation of the title of this Congress,[1] represent *today* a challenge to philosophy, any more specifically and strongly than in any other epoch of our history? It seems that this challenge has always existed since that time when Plato proposed to expel actors and dramatic poets from his ideal Republic. Is it not true that always, in every time—at least within our Western tradition—philosophy has been challenged by art (be it the ancient rhetoric of Demosthenes or, in more recent times, a humanistic education versus the experimental sciences) in the struggle for supremacy in παιδεία or *Bildung*?

I think, nevertheless, that in our epoch this "eternal" challenge has assumed specific and peculiar traits. To recognize this fact means also to take a step forward in the discussion of our problem. In fact, if we can come to see that the way in which the challenge of art to philosophy takes place in our time is radically new, we shall already be familiar with the "transformations of philosophy" mentioned in the less emphatic English formulation of the Congress title.[2] There is no "eternal" way of opposing philosophy and art in the struggle for primacy in *Bildung* because there are no "essences" of art and philosophy that would form a natural opposition. To put it in Heideggerian terms, art and philosophy, like any other sphere of activity, have an essence only in the figurative sense of the German word *Wesen*: each of them *west* so and so at this particular moment in the history of Being. The change in the meaning of "essence" effected in Heidegger's work on the word *Wesen* is just this transformation of philosophy in relation to which we are trying to re-think the position of works of art. It is perhaps interesting to recall here that the first essay in which Heidegger developed his idea of the "history of being," of a possible plurality of *Welten*, is precisely his essay "On the Origin of the Work of Art"; at least in one of the decisive thinkers of our century, the discovery of the verbal, historical, eventual, meaning of "essence" takes place in connection with a reflection on art. Let me try to summarize a first hypothesis: the challenge of art to philosophy, no matter what form it may have assumed in previous epochs of our tradition, takes place today in a situation marked

1. [*Les œuvres d'art: défis à la philosophie?*]

2. [*Artworks and the Transformations of Philosophy.*]

by the transformation of philosophy: this transformation, I maintain, is describable in the terms of the "eventuality" of being and of the "verbal" meaning of *Wesen* developed by Heidegger in his late writings.

This same situation, leaving aside for now the "vagaries" of the philosopher of the Black Forest, can also be described in other terms, those of Richard Rorty's book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979). Rorty's thesis, very roughly summarized, is that the transformation of philosophy we are confronted with today is the end of its "epistemological" form, the end of philosophy thought of in terms of epistemology. This most recent form of philosophy was the last echo of the πρωτὴ φιλοσοφία that Aristotle had set at the foundation of all human knowledge. For Aristotle, πρωτὴ φιλοσοφία meant a knowledge that catches the totality of being by catching the first and most general causes and principles (Nietzsche called it "the attempt at taking possession of the most fruitful ground by a *coup de main*"). In modern times, no specific field of being, such as first principles or causes, has been left for philosophy; so philosophy has tried to keep its supremacy by way of a "critical" analysis of knowledge as such, transforming itself into epistemology and methodology. But this last disguise of metaphysics has undergone a crisis in contemporary thought, in forms and for reasons that I won't attempt to analyze here. This crisis has involved also that part of philosophy which, under the name of aesthetics (inaugurated in its present sense by Kant), had conceived its task to be that of describing the "conditions of possibility" of the experience of art and beauty. Aesthetics too, at least in a large part of its modern development, has been a sort of "epistemology," a methodology of art and beauty. Almost all of the texts on which aestheticians were educated and still work (except, of course, Hegel's *Aesthetics*) are methodological and epistemological: under the dominating influence of the neo-Kantianism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, what aestheticians have generally discussed is the problem of defining the specific traits of aesthetic experience.

As I have said, I am not attempting to discuss here the reasons and meanings behind the end (if it is an end, as I believe) of this epistemological determination (*Bestimmung*: vocation, definition, configuration) of philosophy. In the field of aesthetics, the end of epistemology is not the mere consequence of what happened in the rest of philosophy: it has several specific characteristics that I shall try to analyze, in order to appreciate both the nature of the challenge of art to philosophy and the possible task of philosophical aesthetics in this situation.

The end of epistemology in aesthetics, in our century, is deeply related to the experience of the historical avant-garde at the beginning of the century, with all its consequences up to the present (until postmodernism). It was avant-garde art that violently challenged the tranquil certainty of philosophical aesthetics at the beginning of the twentieth century. While academic philosophers (like the German neo-Kantians and phenomenologists, the Italian neo-idealists, but also realists and pragmatists like Dewey) were engaged with defining aesthetic experience, which was generally thought of in terms of Kantian disinterestedness, avant-garde art conceived of itself as a full experience of truth. That is the case, in different senses, with Futurism and Surrealism, Expressionism and Dada, with the poetics of political engagement (Brecht) as well as with the "abstract" art of Klee and Kandinsky. Poets and artists refused to accept the "isolation" in which both philosophical aesthetics and social conventions confined them.

I am perfectly aware of the risks of proposing a general interpretation of the meaning of the artistic avant-garde at the beginning of this century. Ernst Bloch, *si licet parva . . .*, did it in one of his first works, his illuminating *Vom Geist der Utopie* (1918 and 1923), which is one of the secret sources of the Frankfurt school's *kritische Theorie*. What Bloch, strongly influenced by Expressionism, called the self-assertion of the rights of the spirit, and the emergence of the gothic essence of art, I would prefer to consider, less emphatically, as the claim of art to represent an experience of truth. Artists who claimed that automatic writing revealed the depth of inner life; artists who wanted to catch objects in motion, in an epoch in which the whole world was put into motion by the spread of technology; artists who looked at the forms of objects from the so-called primitive cultures in order to find more essential ways of representing our own reality; and still artists who, by the very nature of the "product" they exhibited as a work of art (Duchamp's *Fountain*), obliged people to re-examine all their preconceptions of art and its social framework—all these artists could not conceive of themselves as being engaged in a "disinterested" activity; they felt deeply committed to an experience of truth.

I am not going to discuss whether or not this is still the atmosphere in today's art; certainly not, in some of its manifestations, as postmodernism very clearly takes its distance from the avant-garde. But perhaps even the most recent experiences and theories of postmodernism can be understood in terms of a "claim of art to truth," provided that we develop all the consequences that are implicit in the experience of the avant-garde for the notion of truth itself. I mean that the challenge of avant-garde art to (academic) philosophy at the beginning of this century was a challenge to a specific notion of truth that saw it merely in terms of the scientific method—as Hans-Georg Gadamer, above all, has shown in *Truth and Method*. To do justice to the claims of art, philosophy has had to revise its "scientistic" notion of truth.

I think we can describe the situation of philosophy after the fall of its epistemological *Bestimmung* in the terms of Dilthey's essay *On the Essence of Philosophy* (1907). Dilthey thought that his position in philosophy (and ours as well) is characterized by the accomplished dissolution of both the ancient idea of metaphysics (Aristotle's πρωτὴ φιλοσοφία) and the modern

one (metaphysics in Cartesian and Kantian terms: the self-evidence of reason as the basis for all truth). As Dilthey had a sort of cyclical view of the history of philosophy, what happens in our epoch is analogous, for him, to what happened at other times of the dissolution of metaphysical systems, like late antiquity and the end of the Middle Ages. As it had in those epochs, in ours too philosophy, having left its systematic structure, tends to become what Dilthey called *Lebensphilosophie*, philosophy of life, which has nothing to do with the sort of vitalistic metaphysics one usually calls by this name. It is simply a kind of thought deeply related to "lived experience," and—this is important—that expresses itself in literary and artistic forms rather than in the form of scientific demonstrations. Dilthey retraced the origin of this current to Schopenhauer (who was, by the way, one of the sources of Dilthey's interpretation of Kant), and saw its developments in authors such as Ruskin and Emerson, Nietzsche, Tolstoy, and Maeterlinck. In the works of these "poet-philosophers," says Dilthey, "the methodological claims to universal validity and foundation weaken, while the process which, from the experience of life, draws an interpretation of it, more and more takes free forms," so that life "receives an explanation in the form of *aperçus*, unmethodical but full of impressiveness [*eindrucksvoll*]." It is this kind of thought, says Dilthey, "which represents the centre of the interests of the new generation." Within the global context of Dilthey's essay, this form of philosophy is considered a provisional one, which should prepare a new, more powerful, and logically rigorous form of philosophy. But if one takes into consideration the themes of his essay in connection with the numerous problems Dilthey left open in his work, and the final lack of accomplishment of many of his writings, a reasonable hypothesis could be the following: although Dilthey strove to build a "systematic" philosophy, in the form of a transcendental psychology of the *Weltanschauungen*, of all the possible *aperçus* that build different philosophies around a specific interpretation of life, he never succeeded in persuading himself and his readers that this philosophy was really better than the poetic, unmethodical expression of *Erlebnisse* that so much interested his contemporaries. One of the reasons for the incompleteness of so many of Dilthey's works is, in my view, the difficulty he found in defining this ideal of a systematic philosophy once he had recognized that the metaphysical essence of philosophy was no longer a practicable path. The sometimes enthusiastic description he gives, in *On the Essence of Philosophy*, of the *Lebensphilosophie* he considers characteristic of his epoch (preferring it, one should note, to other possible texts) shows that he was at least deeply divided as to the evaluation of the task of philosophy.

Dilthey's essay on the essence of philosophy can help us to understand, in a less "prophetic," perhaps, but more useful way, the *Gespräch* between poetry and thought that Heidegger considered a sort of destiny of philosophy

at the moment of the end of metaphysics. We should not forget that there is a very substantial connection between Heidegger's work and Dilthey's: Heidegger says on a page of *Sein und Zeit* that, in his own work, he wants only "to develop and enlarge the views of Dilthey, and to favour their assimilation by the present generation, which has not yet assimilated them" (paragraph 72). What I am suggesting is that we can improve our understanding of Heidegger's idea of a *Gespräch* between thinking and poetry (and other forms of art) by referring to the notion of *Lebensphilosophie* in Dilthey. Of course Heidegger was a severe critic of any reduction of philosophy to *Weltanschauung* and to the expression of *Erlebnisse*; this is not disputed. But the more he developed, after *Sein und Zeit*, his consciousness of the destiny of metaphysics and of the problem of its *Überwindung*, the more also he developed a conception and practice of philosophy as a dialogue with poetry (and not in order to build a "system of *Weltanschauungen*," like Dilthey, but in order to expose himself to the experience of the truth that speaks in poetry). What I want to emphasize is that the interest of Heidegger, as a philosopher, in poetry was not at all the interest of an "aesthetician," in the "epistemological" sense of the word; nor was it the interest, at least as a problematic, of Dilthey, of a thinker who hoped to build a sort of system out of the "given" of the poetical views of the world. His interest is describable, rather, as a *dialogical* one. What is involved in Heidegger's notion of a dialogue between philosophy and poetry is that they speak as partners, and poetry is no longer an "object" of philosophy. That dialogue, I suggest, is possible only at the end of metaphysics, as the only way given to philosophy in an age when it is no longer conceivable as epistemology.

Among the many questions that, at this point, remain open, I shall try to discuss the following three: first, Why should philosophy be a dialogue with poetry and not, rather or also, with the sciences? second, What kind of truth can be found in poetry and art? and finally, Should philosophy merge completely into poetry and art, and if not, why? As you can see, these questions arise directly from what I have been maintaining in this paper: they can be taken as introducing alternative ways of concluding it.

Why should the only way out for philosophy, at the end of metaphysics, be the dialogue with poetry, instead of—as preferred by positivists—with science, be it natural science or the human sciences? I think that Heidegger's position on this point was not inspired by a generic preference for the humanities, for the humanistic tradition, and so on. As one can see also in Dilthey's essay, it is precisely the end of the metaphysical dream, which was also a dream of *objectivity*, that orients philosophy toward a dialogue with what Hegel called the forms of absolute spirit. From the moment when philosophy is no longer conceivable as the knowledge of a specific realm of reality (the first principles) or as a foundational meta-knowledge (epistemology, meth-

odology, the analysis of language, and so on), philosophy has to recognize its kinship with forms of the interpretation of the world—so, in a very large sense, with *Weltanschauungen*—and cannot try to recover its metaphysical (that is, objective, cognitive) content via a privileged dialogue with the sciences. (Here one might also recall the passage in "On the Origin of the Work of Art" in which Heidegger enumerates the various forms in which truth appears: morality, religion, politics, and philosophy, beside art—but not science or technology.) This is so at least until the "aesthetic" character of the sciences themselves is not made completely explicit—and it has already been made clear, after Kuhn and Feyerabend, that the sciences have become more and more "aesthetic" forms of interpretation, and are not, in at least this regard, forms of "knowledge" in the positivistic sense of the word. Given this point—which is mine and not Heidegger's—it remains possible that science too becomes a dialogue-partner for philosophy. This is, in my view, the ultimate sense of the difference between epistemology and hermeneutics that was proposed by Rorty: it is no longer a difference between knowledge and interpretation, but rather between two kinds of interpretation, normal and revolutionary (in the terminology Rorty borrowed from Kuhn). The essence of poetry, wrote Heidegger in "On the Origin of the Work of Art," is *Dichtung*, invention; philosophy, then, can choose its partner "poetry" wherever it finds *Dichtung*, invention—consequently, also in "revolutionary" science.

The two final questions (final at least for this paper) are as usual the most difficult and, in my view, the most meaningful. If we assume that, at the moment of the final dissolution of metaphysics, the only avenue remaining to philosophy is to expose itself to the truth that is experienced in poetry and art, what kind of truth may we expect to find—better, to *experience*—in this dialogue? As I noted earlier in this paper (speaking of Gadamer), when philosophy admits of the very possibility of an experience of truth off the path marked by scientific methodology, the way is open to a radical re-definition of truth itself. It is not a question of names, which could be dissolved by stipulating that we shall call "truth" only those propositions that have been verified (or have not been falsified, which is more feasible) by controlled scientific experiments. Artists would nonetheless continue to call their experience "truth," affirming a relation that philosophy, by the stipulation I mentioned, would dispense with in an *escamotage* that is most "unscientific."

It is surely more productive for thought to consider the double meaning of truth that Heidegger discussed in *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*. In that lecture, Heidegger opposed truth as ὀρθότης *adaequatio intellectus et rei*, as a proposition that pictures the state of affairs, to truth as openness, freedom—that is, as the opening of a horizon within which *res* and *intellectus* can relate and can be confronted in order to control the correspondence of the proposition to the state of affairs. Heidegger thought that truth as correspondence is made

possible only by truth as openness; we can call a proposition true or false only by the application of a set of rules that cannot be called true or false in the same sense, but that are given to us with our *Dasein*, and that are radically historical, in the sense that they are not a "structural," Kantian a priori of human reason.

When Heidegger speaks of the work of art as "ins Werk setzen der Wahrheit" (the putting of truth to work), he has in mind, without any doubt, truth in the sense of openness. But it seems that here we return to a notion of truth as *Weltanschauung*, as a general "view" of the world, vague and pervasive, within which other more specific truths, in the propositional sense of the word, become visible. This reduction of truth to *Weltanschauung* cannot easily be attributed to Heidegger, because he is much more radical than Dilthey: for him, there is no "objective" view of the world compared to which poetry would be "only" *Weltanschauung* (which is also what Nietzsche had in mind when he wrote, in *Twilight of the Idols*, that once the true world has become a fable, we have lost also the "apparent" world). Nevertheless, although Heidegger never considered his dialogue with poetry, to which he dedicated so much of his meditation in the late years, as a reduction of philosophy to the level of *Erlebnis* and *Weltanschauung*, what remains—of his *Gespräch* with poets such as Hölderlin, Rilke, George, Trakl, but also Sophocles—is not a set of philosophical propositions. The question What truths, in the end, has Heidegger found in those poets? is unanswerable. Also unanswerable, in my view, is the question of what results follow from the application of a Heideggerian "method" (with many quotation marks) in the field of literary and art criticism. In poetry and art there is no truth that can be put into the form of a proposition.

The truth that is at work in poetry is the *background* truth that Heidegger distinguishes from the *adæquatio* in *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*. We can say, the truth of an atmosphere, of a sound in the air, of a shared prejudice, of an *intermittence du cœur*: the truth of Proust's *madeleine*. We call it truth because it de-termines, *be-stimmt* (gives tune and voice to), our experience in a sense that is deeper and more pervasive than the sense of the specific "truths" we are faced with within the world. In a certain way, this is a *weak* notion of truth—which could refer us to a beautiful page of Heidegger, at the end of the lecture "Das Ding," where he speaks of the ring of the world and of the *Ge-ring*, the marginal, the poor, and so on. To note this could help us to read Heidegger in a less "romantic" and emphatic way than we usually do. This, I admit, is something that can interest only Heidegger's readers. But the *weakening* of the notion of truth is most probably a more general problem. At the moment of the dissolution of its metaphysical *Wesen*, philosophy experiences a sort of new kinship with poetry: it is the *Lebensphilosophie* of which Dilthey spoke. This experience, once Heidegger radicalized Dilthey by dissolving the met-

aphysical support that remained beneath his theories, leads us to discover the background essence of truth. It is truth as background that is at work in works of art. Only on the basis of this notion of truth can art become a challenge for philosophy.

This leads us to a concluding question—once again, already the problem of Dilthey: if philosophy is no longer metaphysics, neither in the classical nor in the Kantian, epistemological, sense, and if truth reveals itself to be more "background" than thesis and proposition, why doesn't philosophy merge completely into poetry? Is there still a specific characteristic of philosophy on the basis of which the *Gespräch* between *Denken* and *Dichten* can still have a meaning?

I don't have, and I think Heidegger doesn't have, any answer to this question—except, perhaps, some negative hints, which can also be taken as a mere description of the present situation of thought. Philosophy cannot simply merge into poetry because both poetry and philosophy are *still* defined in the terms by which the metaphysical tradition has *be-stimmt* (defined and determined) them. A merging of philosophy into poetry would only mean, under these conditions, a reversal, with philosophy assuming the limits of its "counterpart" (*Weltanschauung* instead of system), without any transformation of the "essence," the *Wesen*. Dialogue, *Gespräch*, means both more and less than this: less, because each of the partners remains faithful, sticks to its own specific and technical tradition (philosophy, then, remains an argumentative form of discourse, with its own vocabulary, syntax, and rhetorics); and more, because what is at stake in the dialogue is exactly the re-examination (de- and re-construction?) of the inherited *Wesen* of both philosophy and poetry, and of the very notion of truth, which through the dialogue of philosophy and poetry begins to lose its metaphysical traits.

Kunst und Technik

FRIEDRICH-WILHELM von HERRMANN

Das von der Bayerischen Akademie der Schönen Künste vorgegebene Rahmenthema jener Vortragsreihe, in der Martin Heidegger im Jahre 1953 seinen berühmten Vortrag "Die Frage nach der Technik" gehalten hat, lautete "Die Künste im technischen Zeitalter." Die Vortragsreihe stellte die Frage: Wie steht es um die Schönen Künste in jenem Zeitalter, das in einer maßgebenden Hinsicht durch die moderne Technik geprägt wird, so daß dieses Zeitalter das technische genannt wird? Das Maßgebende der modernen Technik zeigt sich für jedermann darin, daß sie, geführt durch das Denken der neuzeitlich-mathematischen Naturwissenschaft, nicht mehr wie die ältere Technik ein begrenzter Bereich des Daseins ist, sondern als Grundhaltung das Dasein im ganzen, in allen seinen Feldern, bestimmt. Die moderne Technik greift in alle Bereiche des Daseins aus, nicht nur in das Daseinsfeld der Arbeit, sondern gleichermaßen in die Daseinsfelder der Politik, des öffentlich-gesellschaftlichen Miteinanderseins, der Wissenschaft, soweit diese nicht selbst schon als Naturwissenschaft zur Technik gehört, und schließlich auch der Schönen Künste. Während andere Epochen als Zeitalter der Renaissance, des Barock, des Klassizismus oder der Romantik bezeichnet werden, nennen wir unsere gegenwärtige Epoche das Zeitalter der Technik. Waren es in jenen früheren Zeitaltern Grundhaltungen in Kunst und Philosophie, die einer Epoche den sie charakterisierenden Namen gaben, so ist es in unserem Zeitalter die Grundhaltung der modernen, aus dem Geist der exakten Naturwissenschaft lebenden Technik, nach der wir unsere Zeit benennen. Die Frage wird daher brennend, welche Stellung und welche Bedeutung den Schönen Künsten im Zeitalter der modernen Technik zukommt.

Der Titel der Vortragsreihe nimmt sich aus, als wüßten wir, was es mit der modernen Technik aufsichhabe, als müßten wir lediglich nach der Stellung der Künste im technischen Zeitalter fragen. Diesem Anschein entgegen stellt Heideggers Beitrag erst einmal die Frage nach der Technik als Frage nach ihrem *Wesen*. Wir kennen zwar alle die fast unübersehbare Vielfalt dessen, was zum Inbegriff alles Technischen gehört. Jeder von uns, auch der, der nicht selbst Techniker ist und nicht selbst an der Entwicklung und Herstellung des Technischen teilhat, lebt auf mannigfaltige Weise in der häuslich-privaten wie in der öffentlichen Umwelt mit der Technik and verhält sich zu dem, was die moderne Technik produziert. Allein, die Kenntnis des Technischen, ihrer Vorstellungs- und Produktionsweisen, ihrer Produkte und der technisch

bestimmten Verhaltungsweisen zu diesen mag noch so umfassend sein, sie ist nicht auch schon *Er*kenntnis des *Wesens* der Technik. Wenn das Wesen der modernen Technik alles Technische bestimmt, dann erkennen wir das Technische in dem, was und wie es eigentlich und d.h. in Wahrheit ist, nur aus seinem Wesen. Soll daher die Stellung der Schönen Künste im technischen Zeitalter erhellt werden, muß erst einmal nach dem Wesen dessen, was dieses Zeitalter bewegt, gefragt werden. Denn nur wenn sich das Wesen der modernen Technik zeigt, wissen wir, *worin* die Künste ihre Stellung haben, nach der gefragt werden soll. So entfaltet denn der Vortrag ein Fragen nach dem Wesen der Technik, das sich, quantitativ bemessen, auf 29 Seiten erstreckt. Erst auf den zwei letzten Seiten wendet sich der Vortrag der Frage nach der Stellung der Künste in unserem durch das Wesen der modernen Technik geprägten Zeitalter zu.

Diese Zuwendung zur Kunst geschieht jedoch nicht unvermittelt, weil bereits die Frageschritte auf dem Weg des Fragens nach dem Wesen der Technik von der Frage nach dem Verhältnis dieses Wesens zum Wesen der Kunst begleitet werden. Denn, wie nicht anders zu erwarten, wird auch die Kunst von ihrem *Wesen* her in den Blick genommen. Somit wird von Heidegger, wenn die Stellung der Künste im technischen Zeitalter in Frage steht, nach der *Stellung der aus ihrem Wesen erblickten Kunst im Wesen der modernen Technik* gefragt. Aber das Wesen der Kunst wird im Technik-Vortrag nicht ebenso wie das Wesen der Technik erfragt und enthüllt. Was hier von der Kunst und ihrer Stellung in dem Wesen der modernen Technik durchherrschten Zeitalter gesagt wird, macht von einem Wesenswissen Gebrauch, das in einem anderen Text gewonnen wurde, der ausschließlich nach dem Wesen der Kunst fragt. Dieser Text ist die 1936 gedachte und verfaßte Vortragstrilogie "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes". Zwar hat sich Heidegger auch in seinen späteren und spätesten Schriften immer wieder den Fragen nach der Kunst zugewandt, doch nicht mehr in jener grund-legenden Weise wie in der Kunstwerk-Abhandlung. So, wie der Technik-Vortrag im Zusammenhang mit der kurz voraufgegangenen Vortragstetralogie "Einblick in das was ist" der grund-legende Text für seine Besinnung auf das Wesen der Technik ist, ebenso bildet und bleibt die Kunstwerk-Abhandlung Heideggers grund-legender Text für seine Besinnung auf das Wesen der Kunst. Das Wesen der modernen Technik wird enthüllt als jene geschicklich-geschichtliche Konstellation des Wesens der Unverborgenheit, die in dem Wesenstitel des Ge-stells gefaßt wird. Das Ge-stell selbst aber zeigt sich als die höchste Gefahr, sofern das Walten des Ge-stells in der äußersten Gefährdung des Wesens des Menschen außer der herausfordernden, bestellenden Entbergungsweise jede *andere* Möglichkeit der Entbergung, insbesondere aber die her-vor-bringende und als solche her-vor-kommenlassende Entbergungsweise vertreibt und verbirgt. *Eine* Weise des her-vor-bringenden Entbergens ist aber die *künstlerische*. Somit führt der denkende Einblick in den äußersten Gefahrcharakter des Ge-stells als des Wesens der Technik vor die Erfahrung, daß die Künste in ihrem her-vor-bringenden, poietischen Entbergen aus dem Wesen der modernen

Technik in höchster Weise gefährdet sind. Verhält sich dies aber so, dann sind es auch die Schönen Künste, die in einer besonderen Weise aufgerufen sind zu einer eigenen, zur künstlerischen Besinnung auf das Wesen der Technik und zur entscheidenden Auseinandersetzung mit diesem ihr eigenes Wesen bedrohenden Wesen. Wenn der Technik-Vortrag schließlich die Frage stellt, ob es vielleicht die Schönen Künste seien, denen inmitten der geschicklich-geschichtlichen Herrschaft des Gestells und ihres äußersten Gefahrcharakters zuerst ein anfänglicheres Entbergen gewährt wird, so daß sie in den von ihnen her-vor-gebrachten Kunstwerken das Rettende zum ersten Scheinen bringen, dann kann dieses und alles weitere über die Künste und ihre mögliche Aufgabe im technichen Zeitalter Gesagte nur im Rückgang auf die grund-legenden Wesenseinsichten in der Kunstwerk-Abhandlung in sachgemäßer Weise nach- und mitvollzogen werden.

Der Weg der Frageschritte des Fragens nach dem Wesen der Technik.
Die Gefährdung des Wesens der Kunst aus dem Wesen der Technik.

Eine unabdingbare Voraussetzung für ein der gedachten Sache gemäßes Verständnis ist die Einsicht in das Baugefüge des Textes. Wie alle Texte Heideggers zeigt auch der Technik-Vortrag einen strengen Aufbau: einsetzend mit einer einleitenden formalanzeigenden Exposition des Problems an Hand einer Erläuterung des Titels[1], entfaltet er sich im Hauptteil in zehn Frageschritten, von denen die ersten neun dem Wesen der modernen Technik und der zehnte der Stellung der Schönen Künste in dem vom Wesen der Technik geprägten Zeitalter gelten.

Im *Titel* des Vortrags stehen die 'Frage' und die 'Technik'. Die Betonung liegt auf dem Fragen, weil der Fragecharakter dieser Frage zunächst völlig offen ist und selbst erst im Vollzug des Fragens an Bestimmtheit gewinnen muß. Das Fragen nach der Technik begibt sich nicht auf einen vorgegebenen, in seinem Ausgang und Ziel überschaubaren Weg. Vielmehr muß der Weg des Fragens allererst im Vollzug der Frageschritte *gebaut* werden[2]. Dieser *Weg* führt in eine noch unbegangene Gegend, sofern sich in dieser das Wesen der Technik zeigen soll. In dem Grundwort 'Weg' liegt das 'Methodische' dieses Denkens beschlossen. 'Weg' ist keine ausschmückende Metapher, vielmehr wird in diesem Wort das Ursprüngliche jener 'Methode' erfahren, die sich seit "Sein und Zeit" als die *phänomenologische* versteht[3]. Schon dort bestimmt nicht die Methode die Sache, sondern bestimmt sich die Methode aus der zu denkenden Sache. Insofern ist die phänomenologische Methode niemals eine die Sache, das Thema beherrschende Verfahrensweise; vielmehr ist es die Sache, die die Methode als den Weg, der zu ihr führt, vorzeichnet. Der Weg ist Zugangsweg zu dem, was in die Frage gestellt wird. Sofern der Zugangsweg zu der zu denkenden Sache aus der Gegend, in der sich die zu denkende Sache zeigt, vorgegeben wird, gehört der Zugangsweg in die

Gegend. Während dort, wo die Methode den Charakter der Verfahrensweise hat, das Thema in die Methode gehört, gehört hier, wo der Grundzug der Methode als Weg erfahren ist, dieser als Zugangsweg in die Gegend. Das Denken, das die Frage nach der Technik fragt, begeht den Weg der Gegend, sofern diese es ist, die den Weg freigibt[4]. Weil Heidegger in seinem Spätdenken das Wort 'Methode' einengend als Titel für das Methodendenken des neuzeitlichen Subjekts verwendet, kann er es nicht mehr für die Kennzeichnung des Wegcharakters seines Denkens verwenden. Seine nunmehr vorgenommene Entgegensetzung von Weg und Methode (Verfahren) darf jedoch nicht darüber hinwegtäuschen, daß im Title 'Weg' das Einzigartige des zum Seinsdenken gehörenden Methodischen in einem weiten Sinne erfahren ist. Heideggers wiederholte Besinnungen auf den Wegcharakter des Denkens setzt die frühe Besinnung auf die phänomenologische Methode, die selbst schon außerhalb des neuzeutlichen Methodenverständnisses stand, verwandelnd fort. Daher ist die Besinnung auf die phänomenologische Methode der Fundamentalontologie bereits der Beginn des Weg-Denkens.

Das, was sich als die zu denkende Sache aus der Gegend auf dem Zugangsweg zu ihr zeigt, ist solches, was sich an ihm selbst und von ihm selbst her zeigen soll. Der Wegcharakter des Denkens ist sein phänomenologischer Charakter in der Zusammengehörigkeit von Zugangsweg und Behandlungsart. Die Aufforderung des Vortrags, auf den Weg zu achten, ruft uns dazu auf, unser Augenmerk auf den allererst zu bauenden Zugangsweg und auf die Folge der Frageschritte zu lenken, aber so, daß wir sehen, wie sich das Bauen und d.h. wie sich die Frageschritte aus dem Sichzeigen der Sache ergeben und wie das Denken der Sache ein Sehenlassen dessen ist, was sich an ihm selbst und von ihm selbst her zeigt.

Das Fragen nach der Technik kündigt sich an als ein Fragen nach dem *Wesen* der Technik, das ganz und gar nichts Technisches sei. Wenn auch vorerst noch offen bleibt, in welchem Sinne hier vom 'Wesen' gehandelt werden soll, so deutet diese Formalanzeige schon in die Richtung der Differenz vom Wesen der Technik und der Technik als den Inbegriff alles Technischen. In dieser Differenz kehrt das wieder, was Heidegger schon früh die ontologische Differenz nennt.

Von entscheidender Bedeutung ist schließlich, daß der einleitende Teil uns sagt, *wie* nach dem Wesen der Technik gefragt werden soll. Dieses Fragen soll "unser Dasein dem Wesen der Technik"[5] öffnen. Durch die Einführung des Grundwortes 'Dasein' ist angezeigt, daß wir als die Fragenden unseren eigenen Wesensraum im Dasein erfahren, daß wir aus unserem Dasein nach dem Wesen der Technik fragen müssen. Wollen wir wissen, wie Heidegger zur Zeit der Ausarbeitung des Technik-Vortrages das Dasein im Menschen denkt, so erhalten wir aus der 1949 gedachten 'Einleitung' in die Freiburger Antrittsvorlesung "Was ist Metaphysik?" Auskunft. Dort heißt es: "Um sowohl den Bezug des Seins zum Wesen des Menschen als auch das Wesensverhältnis des Menschen zur Offenheit ('Da') des Seins als solchen zugleich und in einem Wort zu treffen, wurde für den Wesensbereich, in dem der Mensch als Mensch steht, der Name

'Dasein' gewählt"[6]. Das besagt: Nur sofern sich der Bezug des Seins zum Wesen des Menschen entfaltet, kann sich der Mensch in seinem Wesen (Existenz) und als dieses Wesen zur Offenheit des Seins verhalten. Soll das Fragen nach dem Wesen der Technik unser Dasein diesem Wesen öffnen, dann ist damit vordeutend gesagt, daß das Wesen der Technik im Umkreis unseres Daseins, im Umkreis des Bezugs des Seins zu unserem Wesen und unseres Wesensverhältnisses (Existenz als Ek-sistenz) zur Offenheit des Seins erfragt wird. Offenbar hat das gesuchte Wesen der Technik etwas zu tun mit dem Bezug des Seins zum Menschenwesen und mit dem darin ermöglichten Verhältnis des Menschenwesens (Ek-sistenz) zur Offenheit, zur Wahrheit, zur Unverborgenheit des Seins.

Weil das Fragen nach dem Wesen der Technik an einem Weg, dem Zugangsweg zu ihm, baut, muß als erstes der *Ausgang* dieses Weges bedacht werden[7]. Das Fragen nimmt seinen Ausgang von der geläufigen und allgemeinen Bestimmung der Technik. Darnach ist die Technik im weiten Sinne, unter Einschluß der handwerklichen, ein Mittel für Zwecke und ein menschliches Tun, nämlich das Setzen von Zwecken und das Beschaffen und Benützen der Mittel zur Erreichung der Zwecke. In Anbetracht dessen, daß die geläufige Kennzeichnung der Technik am Mittel-Zweck-Schema orientiert ist, daß sie die Technik als ein vom Menschen gehandhabtes Instrument versteht, kann sie die instrumental-anthropologische Bestimmung genannt werden. Allein, diese richtige instrumental-anthropologische Bestimmung ist doch nur eine Charakterisierung des Grundzuges der Technik als des Technischen, nicht aber eine Bestimmung des Wesens, das auch noch vom allgemeinen Grundzug der Technik unterschieden ist. Das gesuchte Wesen der Technik ist nichts, was sich *mit* dem Technischen und seinem Grundzug zeigt. Im Sichzeigen des Technischen bleibt es als das, was das Sichzeigen des Technischen in seinem allgemeinen Grundzug ermöglicht, verhüllt. Daher muß das in der instrumental-anthropologischen Bestimmung der Technik *verhüllte* Wesen allererst *enthüllt* werden. Ein solches Enthüllen vollbringt sich *als ein Sehenlassen* dessen, was sich für dieses Sehenlassen an ihm selbst von ihm selbst her zeigt.

Bildet diese instrumental-anthropologische Kennzeichnung der Technik den Ausgang für ein in Gang zu setzendes Fragen nach dem Wesen der Technik, so ist damit zugleich die Fragerichtung des *ersten Frageschrittes* eröffnet. Dieser fragt nach dem *Wohin der Hingehörigkeit* des Instrumentalen, des Mittel-Zweck-Schemas[8]. Als dieses Wohin der Hingehörigkeit zeigt sich die Kausalität der vier Ursachen, wie diese in der scholastisch-thomistischen Philosophie gedacht wird. In allen vier Ursachen (causa materialis, causa formalis, causa finalis, causa efficiens) ist das Ursache-sein als eine Weise des Bewirkens verstanden.

Der *zweite Frageschritt* vollbringt sich als die Rückführung der vier thomistischen causae auf die vier aristotelischen αἴτια[9]. Da die griechische Bedeutung von τὸ αἴτιον nicht im Bewirken, vielmehr im Verschulden liegt, sind die vier αἴτια vier unterschiedliche aber in ihrer Unterschiedlichkeit zusammengehörende Weisen des Verschuldens: ἐξ οὗ

(ὑποκείμενον, ὕλη), εἶδος (τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι), ὅθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς μεταβολῆς ἡ πρώτη ἢ τῆς ἠρεμήσεως, τέλος (οὗ ἕνεκα)[10]. Das, was sie verschulden, ist das herzustellende bzw. das hergestellte Seiende. Die Überlegung des Herstellenden versammelt die drei anderen Weisen des Verschuldens dergestalt, daß er im Vorblick auf das, um dessentwillen etwas hergestellt wird, die Wahl des Aussehens und des Woraus trifft. Im Zusammenspiel der vier Verschuldensweisen wird z.B. die Silberschale hervorgebracht. Sie verschulden auf vierfach-unterschiedlich-zusammengehörige Weise dieses Seiende in seinem Vor-und Bereitliegen.

Als *dritter Frageschritt* ergibt sich die Frage nach dem, was jene vier Verschuldensweisen einigt, und d.h. woher ihre Einheit stammt, und d.h. welches der Bereich ihres Zusammenspiels ist[11]. Die Suche nach der Antwort auf diese drei Fragen, die doch nur eine sind, beginnt mit der Beantwortung der vierten Frage, welchen Sinn dieses Verschulden hat. Gefragt ist nach dem anfänglichen Sinn des Verschuldens im Umkreis der vier αἴτια, der durch die spätere römische Übersetzung als causa sich verhüllt hat. Hierbei zeigt sich: Die vier Verschuldensweisen verschulden primär das *Anwesen* des Anwesenden. Denn sie lassen das Anwesende allererst ins Anwesen ankommen; sie lassen es in sein Anwesen los, sie lassen es in seine vollendete Ankunft an. Der anfängliche Sinn des Verschuldens ist somit das *Ver-an-lassen* in der Bedeutung des Vorkommenlassens ins Anwesen. Im Hinblick auf die Sinnklärung des Verschuldens wandelt sich die Formulierung des dritten Frageschrittes: Welches ist der Bereich des Zusammenspiels der vier Weisen des Ver-an-lassens? Die Antwort lautet: Das, worin die vier Weisen des Verschuldens als des Ver-anlassens zusammenspielen, ist ein *Her-vor-bringen*, d.h. aber ein Bringen, das Noch-nicht-Anwesendes vor-bringt als nunmehr Anwesendes in sein Anwesen. Dieses Her-vor-bringen ist die griechisch erfahrene ποίησις. Sie ist der gesuchte einigende Bereich, der die vier Weisen des Ver-an-lassens im vorhinein einigt.

Hier, wo der Vortrag einen Blick auf die ganze Weite des Her-vorbringens wirft, wird auch zum ersten Mal das *Her-vor-bringen,* die ποίησις, der *Schönen Künste* genannt. Mit dem handwerklichen Verfertigen hat sie gemeinsam, daß ihr jeweils Her-vor-gebrachtes den Aufbruch des Her-vor-bringens in einem anderen, im Hersteller und im Künstler, hat, während das Her-vor-bringen der φύσις als ein Von-sich-her-aufgehen sein Eigenes darin hat, daß das von Natur aus Anwesende den Aufbruch des Her-vor-bringens in ihm selbst hat. Andererseits wird nun aber das Auszeichnende des künstlerischen Her-vor-bringens gegenüber dem bloß anfertigenden charakterisiert als das *künstlerisch-dichtende zum-Scheinen und ins-Bild-Bringen*[12]. Bereits diese erste Wesenskennzeichnung des künstlerischen Schaffens macht von einem Wesenswissen Gebrauch, das nicht nur auf die platonisch-aristotelischen Bestimmungen der ποίησις zurückgreift und diese lediglich phänomenologisch erläutert, sondern das schon stillschweigend aus jenem ursprünglicheren Bereich schöpft, dem auch die platonisch-aristotelischen Bestimmungen entspringen. Wenn die Rückfrage nach der Herkunft des Instrumentalen

der modernen Technik vorerst beim Her-vor-bringen der ποίησις angelangt ist, zu diesem aber auch die Künste gehören, dann läßt sich auf dieser Wegstation bereits zweierlei sagen. Versteht sich die moderne Technik aus dem Instrumentalen und weist dieses zurück in die ποίησις, dann hat die moderne Technik ihre Herkunft aus jenem Bereich, in dem sich auch die Kunst hält, womit jedoch nicht etwa gesagt ist, daß die moderne Technik selbst ein Her-vor-bringen ist. Vielmehr leuchtet hier zum ersten Mal der Zusammenhang zwischen der Frage nach dem Wesen der Technik und dem Wesen der Schönen Künste auf.

Der *vierte Frageschritt* auf dem Weg des Fragens nach dem Wesen der modernen Technik fragt, wie denn das Her-vor-bringen in den drei unterschiedlichen Weisen geschieht, d.h. aber, was das Her-vor-bringen selbst ist, worin die vierfache Weise des Ver-an-lassens von Anwesendem aus dem Noch-nicht-anwesen in das Anwesen spielt.[13] Diese Frage schließt ein Wissen darum ein, daß das Her-vor-bringen nicht in ihm selbst ruht, sondern in einem Früheren beruht. Sofern nun das Her-vorbringen Seiendes aus der Verborgenheit her in die Unverborgenheit seines Anwesens vor-bringt, beruht das Her-vor-bringen in dem *Entbergen*, in der ἀλήθεια. Das Her-vor-bringen, die ποίησις, ist nur dann in seinem Wesen erfaßt, wenn es als Weise der Entbergung gesehen wird.

Jetzt, da das Zurückfragen in die Herkunft der instrumentalanthropologischen Bestimmung der Technik auf die Entbergung gestoßen ist, drängt sich die Frage auf, was denn das gesuchte Wesen der modernen Technik mit dem Entbergen und der Unverborgenheit zu tun habe. Ist es nicht eher so, daß die Unverborgenheit der Wesensbereich nur für die griechische τέχνη und vielleicht auch noch für die spätere und heutige handwerkliche Technik, nicht jedoch für die moderne Kraftmaschiene- und Atomtechnik ist? Entegegen dieser Vermutung lautet jedoch die Antwort: Die moderne Technik, auch und gerade sofern sie auf der neuzeitlich-mathematischen Naturwissenschaft beruht, hat *nicht nur etwas* in der Weise der bloßen Herkunft, sondern hat *Alles* mit dem Entbergen zu tun. Im Entbergen beruht nicht nur diese oder jene Verfertigung und Her-vor-bringung, sondern "die Möglichkeit aller herstellenden Verfertigung"[14] und somit auch die der modernen industriellen, die selbst vielleicht kein Her-vor-bringen, wohl aber eine eigentümliche, erst noch in ihrem Eigencharakter zu bestimmende Entbergungsweise ist. Um das zu sehen muß allerdings das Wesen der Entbergung und der Unverborgenheit ursprünglicher erfahren und in seinem Strukturgehalt entfaltet werden, als dies im griechischen Denken geschah. Auch die moderne Technik, die sich zweifellos tiefgreifend von jeder Form der älteren Technik unterscheidet, ist *eine*, und zwar eine *besondere* Weise des Entbergens. Hier deutet sich an, daß das Entbergen nicht einförmig geschieht, vielmehr sich in vielen geschichtlich sich wandelnden Weisen entfaltet. Der Bereich der Entbergung, des ursprünglicheren Wesens der Wahrheit, zeigt sich als der *Bereich für* das gesuchte *Wesen* der modernen Technik. Noch ist dieses Wesen nicht erblickt, aber der Wesensbereich, innerhalb dessen wir Ausschau halten

müssen, hat sich nunmehr gezeigt.

Noch innerhalb des vierten Frageschrittes, der vor die Entbergung als den Wesensbereich für das zu betimmende Wesen der modernen Technik führt, erfolgt eine Besinnung auf das Wesen der griechischen τέχνη, die schon im Blick stand, als die vier ἄιτια, die vier Verschuldensweisen im Her-vor-bringen eines Anwesenden, bedacht wurden. Denn die τέχνη, das handwerkliche Tun und Können wie auch das Schaffen der Schönen Künste, vollzieht sich als ein Her-vor-bringen im Zusammenspiel jener vier Weisen des Ver-an-lassens. Doch innerhalb der hier erfolgenden Besinnung auf die Bedeutung der τέχνη kommt es vor allem auf den Hinweis darauf an, daß Aristoteles die ποίησις der τέχνη als eine Weise des ἀληθεύειν und somit des Entbergens faßt[15]. Die Wesensbestimmung der τέχνη lautet bei ihm ἕξις τις μετὰ λόγου ἀληθοῦς ποιητική[16]: die Verhaltung des Her-vor-bringens, die gemäß der entbergenden Überlegung, d.h. der entbergenden Versammlung der vier αἴτια, her-vor-bringt. Die τέχνη ist *als ein Entbergen* und nicht als ein bloßes Verfertigen oder Herstellen ein Her-vor-bringen. Die ποίησις hat ihr Wesen im Entbergen; sie ist ein her-vor-bringendes Entbergen.

Nachdem der vierte Frageschritt vor den Wesensbereich der modernen Technik geführt hat, vor den Bereich des Entbergens, hält der *fünfte Frageschritt* Ausschau nach dem Neuartigen und Eigentümlichen jener Entbergungsweise, die die moderne Technik durchherrscht und bestimmt[17]. Bevor diese ihre positive Charakterisierung erhält, wird gesagt, was sie nicht ist. Die eigentümliche Entbergungsweise der modernen Technik "entfaltet sich nun aber nicht in ein Her-vor-bringen im Sinne der ποίησις"[18]. Noch bevor im Blick auf die technisch-industriellen Produktionsweisen die darin waltende Entbergungsweise phänomenologisch beschrieben wird, wird vorgreifend der Grundzug der Entbergung der in den technischen Produktionsweisen hergestellten Produkte als das *Herausfordern* genannt. Das Entbergen der modernen Technik entfaltet sich nicht als ein her-vor-bringendes, vielmehr als ein her-aus-forderndes Entbergen. Das Herausfordern muß als Gegenwort zum Her-vor-bringen gehört und gedacht werden. Das Entbergen der modernen Technik ist kein Bringen, sondern ein Fordern, und dieses Fordern hat nicht den Charakter des Her-vor, sondern den Grundzug des Her-aus. Weil alle Technik ein Verhältnis zur Natur ist, ist die moderne Technik vor allem ein herausforderndes Verhalten zur Natur und zu ihrem Selbst-her-vor-bringen, das als dieses zurückgedrängt wird. Das Herausfordern hat den Charakter des *Stellens* und *Nachstellens*, das als soches dem Her-vor-kommen-lassen alles Her-vor-bringens *entgegengesetzt* ist. Sofern das herausfordernde Stellen das, was darin entborgen wird, das technisch hergestellte Seiende, be-trifft, ist es ein *Bestellen*. Die eigene Entbergungsweise (Weise der Entdeckung) der zur modernen Technik gehörenden Verhaltungen ist als das Herausfordern und Stellen das Bestellen. Das Seiende, das vom bestellenden Entbergen betroffen ist, kann vorerst das *Bestellte* genannt werden.

Mit dem Aufweis des bestellenden Entbergens ist noch nicht das volle

Wesen der modernen Technik bestimmt, sondern nur der erste von *drei Teilschritten* vollzogen. Der erste Teilschritt ergibt sich aus dem Hinblick auf die eigentümliche Entbergungsweise der technisch-industriellen Verhaltungsweisen. In der Erweiterung dieses Hinblicks auf die eigentümliche Entborgenheitsweise des vom bestellenden Entbergen betroffenen Seienden erfolgt der zweite Teilschritt des fünften Frageschrittes. In jedem Herstellen, im handwerklichen wie im technisch-industriellen, kommt etwas, was vorher so nicht war, zustande; es kommt darin zu seinem Stand, worin es je nach der Entbergungsweise entborgen bzw. unverborgen ist. Das im *bestellenden* Entbergen entborgene Seiende hat den diesem bestellenden Entbergen gemäßen Entborgenheitscharakter des *Be-standes*. Dieses Wort ist wie das Wort 'Bestellen', obwohl beide in ihrer Wortgestalt zur gewöhnlichen Sprache gehören, als Wesenstitel neu geschöpft, gleich als hätte es sie in unserer Sprache bisher nicht gegeben. Denn um den Wesenssinn beider Titel denken zu können, müssen wir von den ontischen Bedeutungen beider Worte, so, wie wir sie in unserer Sprache verwenden, gänzlich absehen. Was entborgen ist in der Weise des Be-standes, hat seinen Stand, seine Art des Vorliegens, aus dem Be-stellen. Zugleich ist der Wesenstitel 'Bestand' in Entsprechung zu '*Gegenstand*' gebildet. 'Gegenstand' ist hier genommen als philosophischer Wesenstitel für das zu erkennende Seiende, so, wie etwa Kant vom Gegenstand der Erfahrung spricht. Für Heidegger ist Gegen-stand wie Be-stand eine Entborgenheitsweise von Seiendem. Was als Gegen-stand entborgen ist, hat seinen Stand und seine Entborgenheit aus dem Vorstellungsbezug des Subjekts. Das Vor-stellen stellt von sich aus das Seiende vor sich, so daß dieses dem es Vorstellenden gegenüber-steht. Der Stand des Gegenüber ist rückbezogen auf das Vorstellen. Nur innerhalb und aus der vorstellenden Verhaltung ist das Seiende als das so Vor-gestellte ein Gegen-stand. Wenn das Seiende seinen Entborgenheits-stand in der Weise des Be-standes hat, dann steht es nicht mehr nur innerhalb des Vorstellungsbezuges dem Vorstellenden als das von ihm Vorgestellte gegenüber. Innerhalb der technisch-industriellen Verhaltungsweisen und deren bestellende Entbergung verschwindet das Seiende als Gegenstand zugunsten des Seienden als Bestand.

Nach der phänomenologischen Aufweisung der spezifischen Entbergungsweise in den Verhaltungen der modernen Technik sowie der spezifischen Entborgenheitsweise des in den technischen Produktionsverhaltungen Produzierten erfolgt als dritter Teilschritt im Zuge der Frage nach dem Vollzieher des bestellenden Entbergens die *Rückverwurzelung* der bisher aufgewiesenen Ganzheit von bestellendem Entbergen und Entborgenheit als Bestand *in das volle Wesen der Unverborgenheit*. Damit wird zugleich die Hineingehörigkeit des Wesens (der Eksistenz) des Menschen in das Wesen der Unverborgenheit gedacht. Eingeleitet wird dieser letzte Teilschritt des fünften und entscheidenden Frageschrittes im Fragen nach dem Wesen der modernen Technik durch die Frage nach dem Vollzieher des bestellenden Entbergens. Zum Sinn des geschehenden Entbergens

und der darin sich bildenden Entborgenheit des Seienden gehört, daß sich dem Menschen für diesen entbergenden Vollzug die von ihm zu vollziehende Entbergungsweise je schon *zugesprochen hat*. Sein Entbergungsvollzug hält sich in einem Zuspruch von Entbergung und Unverborgenheit, so daß die vollzogene Entbergung des Seienden ihren Ursprung nicht im menschlichen Vollzieher hat, sondern der menschliche Entbergungsvollzug seinen Ursprung in der den Menschen und das Seiende im Ganzen, inmitten dessen der Mensch eksistiert, umfangenden Unverborgenheit hat. Unverborgenheit geschieht primär in dem an den Menschen ergehenden Zuspruch. Dieser nennt die Weise, wie sich eine Entbergungsweise der Unverborgenheit dem Menschen *zuwirft*. Der Zuspruch als Zuwurf läßt den Menschen eksistieren in der Geworfenheit dessen, worein er aus dem Zuspruch der Unverborgenheit geworfen ist. Die so sich zusprechende, zuwerfende Entbergungsweise übernimmt der Mensch in der eksistenzialen Weise des Entwurfs, der das auseinanderfaltet und öffnet, was sich in der eksistenzialen Weise des Geworfenseins ihm zugeworfen hat. In der Einheit von eksistenzialer Geworfenheit und eksistenzialem Entwurf wurzelt der Vollzug des Entbergens des Seienden in dessen Entborgenheit. Was wir hier über die Ganzheit dieser drei eksistenzialen Weisen der menschlichen Eksistenz gesagt haben, ist so allgemein gehalten, daß es für alle Entbergungsweisen, nicht nur für die bestellende, gilt. Im Eksistieren als der Einheit der aus dem Zuspruch geschehenden Geworfenheit, des übernehmenden, entfaltend-öffnenden Entwurfs und des Entbergens des Seienden entspricht der Mensch dem Zuspruch der Unverborgenheit. Mit der Rückverwurzelung des Entbergens des Seienden in den Zuspruch betritt der Technik-Vortrag den vollen Wesensraum des Daseins, so, wie dieses in der Einleitung zu "Was ist Metaphysik?" gefaßt wird. Was dort als "Bezug des Seins zu Wesen des Menschen" angesprochen wurde, erweist sich jetzt als der Zuspruch der entbergenden Unverborgenheit, der, sofern er an das Wesen des Menschen ergeht, dieses allererst als Eksistenz eröffnet. Und was dort als das "Wesensverhältnis des Menschen zur Offenheit ('Da') des Seins als solchen"gefaßt wurde, zeigt sich uns jetzt als das dreifach-einige eksistierende Entsprechen der sich in ihrer jeweiligen Entbergungsweise zusprechenden Unverborgenheit.

Wenn wir nun das allgemein Gesagte konkretisieren im Blick auf die eigentümliche Entbergungsweise der modernen Technik, dann ergibt sich: Die herausfordernde, stellende Entbergungsweise spricht sich dem eksistierenden Menschen dergestalt zu, daß dieser seinerseits und ursprünglicher als das nichteksistierende Seiende in das bestellende Entbergen herausgefordert ist. Die Weise, in der er eksistierend diesem Zuspruch entspricht, hat den Charakter eines *Teilnehmens am* ganzheitlichen Unverborgenheits- bzw. Entbergungsgeschehen. Der Hinweis auf das eksistierende Teilnehmen ist die Antwort auf die Frage, wie der Mensch das bestellende Entbergen vollzieht.

Im Blick auf "jenes Herausfordern, das den Menschen stellt, das Wirkliche als Bestand zu nehmen", heißt es schließlich, es müsse so

genommen werden, "wie es sich zeigt"[19]. Damit gibt der Text einen knappen, aber deutlichen Hinweis auf den phänomenologischen Grundzug dieses Denkens, das darauf aus ist, das volle Wesen der modernen Technik innerhalb des vollen Daseinsraumes zu enthüllen. Das Wesen der Technik soll so genommen und hingenommen werden, wie es sich an ihm selbst von ihm selbst her zeigt, d.h. wie es für das enthüllende Denken Phänomen wird. Der herausfordernde Zuspruch "versammelt den Menschen in das Bestellen"[20]. Dieses aus dem Zuspruch kommende Versammeln hat den Charakter des Kozentrierens. Der aus dem herausfordernden Zuspruch eksistierende Mensch ist gebannt in die Weisen des bestellenden Entbergens, so, daß ihm das nicht bestellende, das her-vor-bringende Entbergen entzogen wird. Dieser ganzheitliche phänomenale Sachverhalt, daß der herausfordernde Zuspruch bzw. Anspruch den Menschen "dahin versammelt, das Sichentbergende als Bestand zu bestellen", wird in dem Grundwort *Ge-stell* als dem Titel für das Wesen der modernen Technik gefaßt[21]. Auch dieses Wort ist in seinem Wesenssinn eine Neubildung Heideggers, auch wenn uns seine Wortgestalt mit seiner ontischen Bedeutung aus unserer Sprache vertraut ist. Die Wesensbestimmung des Ge-stells als "das Versammelnde jenes Stellens, das den Menschen stellt, d.h. herausfordert, das Wirkliche in der Weise des Bestellens als Bestand zu entbergen"[22] müssen wir als konkret-geschichtliche Gestalt jener Bezüge verstehen, in denen das Dasein bestimmt wurde. Der Bezug des Seins zum Wesen des Menschen vollbringt sich als das Versammelnde (Ge-) des Stellens (-stell), das den Menschen stellt, d.h. herausfordert in das stellende, bestellende (-stell) Entbergen. Das Wesensverhältnis des Menschen zur Offenheit des Seins vollzieht sich konkret-geschichtlich in der modernen Technik als das dreifach-einige eksistierende Teilnehmen an der herausfordernden Entbergungsweise. Im Ge-stell ist somit die Ganzheit des Bezuges des Seins zum Wesen des Menschen und des Wesensverhältnisses des Menschen zur Offenheit des Seins gedacht — gedacht als die Zusammengehörigkeit von versammelnd-herausforderndem Zuspruch und geworfen-entwerfend-entbergendem Entsprechen. Hier sei angemerkt, daß das vom Menschen teilnehmend vollzogene Entbergen in einem engeren und in einem weiteren Sinne gesehen werden muß. Im engeren Sinne meinen wir damit die dritte Eksistenzweise des herausfordernden, bestellenden Entbergens des Seienden. Der weiter gefaßte Sinn des teilnehmenden Entbergens bezieht sich auf alle drei Eksistenzweisen.

Zur ersten und entscheidenden Wesensbestimmung der modernen Technik gehört auch eine grundlegende Kennzeichnung des Wesensverhältnisses der modernen Technik zur neuzeitlich exakten Naturwissenschaft. Diese gibt Aufschluß darüber, inwiefern die moderne Technik naturwissenschaftlich und die Naturwissenschaften technisch verfaßt sind. Als Einsicht ergibt sich, daß die neuzeitlich physikalische Theorie der Natur, sofern deren Vorstellungsart in einem Nachstellen der Natur als einem berechenbaren Kräftezusammenhang beruht, seit ihrem Beginn die "Wegbereiterin" und der "Vorbote" des Entbergungsge-

schicks des Ge-stells ist[23], daß somit das Ge-stell, bevor es als Wesen der Kraftmaschinen-und Atomtechnik waltet, schon in einer Vorgestalt in der reinen Theorie der neuzeitlich mathematischen Naturwissenschaft waltete.

Nachdem der alle weiteren Frageschritte führende und daher entscheidende Einblick in das Wesen der modernen Technik gelungen ist, erfolgt ein bedeutsamer Hinweis wiederum auf das *Verhältnis des herausfordernden Entbergens zum her-vor-bringenden.* Das '-stellen' im Ge-stell nennt zwar primär das herausfordernde Stellen; darüberhinaus aber läßt es das her-vor-bringende Stellen des Her-stellens mit anklingen, sofern es aus diesem stammt. Das herausfordernde Bestellen ist, weil es kein Her-vor-kommen-*lassen* des Anwesenden in die Entborgenheit seines Was- und Wieseins wie das her-vor-bringende Herstellen ist, sondern ein Fordern und Zwingen, grundverschieden gegenüber dem her-vor-bringenden Herstellen. Dennoch ist es im Wesen mit diesem verwandt, weil beide Weisen der Entbergung sind und weil die eine ihre Herkunft aus der anderen hat. Ist aber das Entbergen in den Schönen Künsten eine ausgezeichnete Weise des Her-vor-bringens, dann ist das bestellende Entbergen grundverschieden im Verhältnis zum künstlerischen Entbergen.

Nachdem im fünften Frageschritt das Wesen der modernen Technik als Ge-stell enthüllt ist, bemühen sich die nun noch erfolgenden Frageschritte sechs bis neun um eine Enthüllung von Wesenscharakteren des Ge-stells, die sich bisher noch nicht gezeigt haben. Mit dem Aufweis desWesens als Ge-stell ist dem vollen Wesen der modernen Technik noch nicht entsprochen.

Was ist das Ge-stell als solches selbst, worin west das Ge-stell selber– lautet der *sechste Frageschritt*[24]. Hier wird nicht vom Ge-stell weg gefragt zu einem anderen, sondern hier wird in das Ge-stell hineingefragt, damit dieses sich an ihm selbst von ihm selbst her in einem Wesenscharakter zeige, der bislang noch nicht zur Abhebung gelangte. Dieser Wesenscharakter ist der Charakter des Ge-stells als eines *Geschickes.* Der Geschick-Charakter zeigt sich, wenn gesehen wird, daß das versammelnde Herausfordern im Ge-stell den Menschen, wenn es diesen in das bestellende Entbergen herausfordert, auf den Weg dieses Entbergens bringt, d.h. ihn in diese Entbergungsweise *schickt.* Das Ge-stell ist als das versammelnde Herausfordern ein versammelndes Schicken und in diesem Sinne ein Ge-schick. Es ist *ein* Geschick und nicht *das* Geschick, weil es selbst nur eine mögliche Schickung von vielen Schickungen ist. Eine solche Schickung ist auch das her-vor-bringende Entbergen. Das *anfänglich* und *erstlich* Schickende und in diesem Sinne *das* Geschick ist die schickende entbergend-verbergende Unverborgenheit selbst. Das schickende Wesen der Unverborgenheit, das im Zuschicken von Entbergungsweisen waltet, bestimmt das Wesen der Geschichte. Die Unverborgenheit ist in ihrem Wesen geschicklichgeschichtlich, indem sie geschicklich-geschichtliche Entbergungsweisen zuschickt. Hierher gehört die Erörterung von Geschick und Freiheit, die

zeigt, daß das Geschick kein unausweichliches Schicksal ist, worin der Mensch unfrei ist, daß vielmehr das Schickende des Geschicks das den Menschen zu seiner eksistierenden Freiheit jeweils Befreiende ist.

Im phänomenologischen Blick auf den Geschickcharakter des Ge-stells zeigt sich dieses schließlich als die *höchste Gefahr.* Der *siebte Frageschritt* führt vor diesen Wesenscharakter jenes Geschicks, das als das Ge-stell erfahren ist[25]. Die *höchste* Gefahr ist eine geschicklichgeschichtliche Weise *der* Gefahr, die als solche in unterschiedlichen Weisen zu jedem Geschick der Entbergung gehört. Deshalb wird innerhalb des siebten Frageschrittes erst einmal der allgemeine Grundzug der Gefahr, wie er jeder Schickung eigen ist, gehoben. Damit, daß der Mensch aus dem schickenden Wesen der Unverborgenheit in jeder Schickung auf einen Weg des Entbergens gebracht ist, ist er zwischen zwei Möglichkeiten gebracht, sich auf dem Weg seines Entbergens zu verhalten. Gemäß der einen Möglichkeit verfolgt und betreibt er nur das in seinem Entbergen entborgene Seiende und nimmt alle Maße von dem verfolgten und betriebenen Seienden her. Im Eksistieren in *dieser* Grundmöglichkeit verschließt sich die *andere* Möglichkeit. Es ist die Grundmöglichkeit, der gemäß wir im Entbergen des Seienden nicht an dieses verfallen und nicht im Verfolgen und Betreiben des Seienden aufgehen, sondern in den entbergenden Verhaltungen des Wesens des entborgenen Seienden und seiner Unverborgenheit eingedenk bleiben. Ein dergestalt sich vollziehendes Eksistieren hält sich offen für die Erfahrung des Wesens des Menschen als der gebrauchten Zugehörigkeit zum Entbergungsgeschehen, gebraucht in der Weise des eksistierenden Teilnehmens. Man sieht unschwer, daß in diesen beiden Möglichkeiten das weitergedacht worden ist, was in "Sein und Zeit" als die beiden Grundmodi der uneigentlichen, verfallenden, und der eigentlichen Existenz erfahren ist. Sofern es zum Wesen einer jeden Schickung gehört, zwischen diese beiden Möglichkeiten und damit vor die erste Möglichkeit gebracht zu sein, der gemäß der Entborgenheitscharakter des Seienden sich verschließt, "ist der Mensch aus dem Geschick her gefährdet"[26]. Deshalb ist *das* Ge-schick der Entbergung in jeder geschickten Entbergungsweise wesensnotwendig *Gefahr.* Die aus dem jeweiligen Entbergungsgeschick kommende Gefährdung bzw. Bedrohung ist die Möglichkeit des Sichversehens am Entborgenen und des Mißdeutens des Entborgenen. Wie aber die Schickungen der Entbergungsweisen sich wandeln, so wandelt sich mit ihnen der Gefahrcharakter. Die zum Wesen des Geschicks gehörende Gefahr ist selbst geschicklichgeschichtlich. Solche geschichtlichen Weisen der Gefahr sind z.B die Entbergung des Seienden im Lichte des Ursache-Wirkung-Zusammenhangs oder die Entbergung des Seienden bzw. der Natur als einen berechenbaren Wirkungszusammenhang von Kräften.

In der Schickung des Ge-stells wandelt sich der Gefahrcharakter der schickenden Unverborgenheit zur höchsten Gefahr. Worin zeigt sich das *Höchstmaß an Gefährdung* aus der schickenden Unverborgenheit? Dieses wird nach *zwei Hinsichten* gekennzeichnet. Weil die *zweite* Hin-

sicht der *Wesensgrund* für die *erste* ist, beginnen wir mit ihr. Das Geschick des Ge-stells waltet als äußerste Gefahr, weil es nicht mehr das Entbergen als ein solches zum Vorschein kommen läßt, es vielmehr das Entbergen als solches verbirgt und damit das Scheinen und Walten der Wahrheit als der Unverborgenheit verstellt. Das Geschick des Ge-stells ist jene Entbergungsweise, in der sich das entbergende-verbergende Walten der Unverborgenheit in höchster Weise entzieht und verstellt. Das Ge-stell ist die äußerste Selbstverstellung des Wesens der Unverborgenheit. Dort, wo sich das entbergende- verbergende Walten der Unverborgenheit in höchster Weise selbst verstellt, vertreibt es jede andere Möglichkeit der Entbergung, die nicht die bestellende ist, *verbirgt* und *vertreibt* sie vor allem das *her-vor-bringende*, das poietische Entbergen in seinen unterschiedlichen Weisen. Das herausfordernde Stellen im Ge-stell drängt den Menschen in einen entbergenden Bezug zum Seienden, der dem her-vor-bringenden, her-vor-kommen-lassenden Entbergen 'entgegengesetztgerichtet' ist[27]. Der Entbergungssinn des bestellenden Entbergens ist dem Entbergungssinn des her-vorbringenden Entbergens entgegengesetzt. Das *Bestellen* ist, wie es ist, *aus* dem *Vertreiben* und dem *Entzug* des *Her-vor-bringens*. Das bestellende Entbergen ist somit dem her-vor-bringenden Entbergen der Natur, des handwerklichen Herstellens *und* des künstlerischen Schaffens entgegengesetzt. Mit anderen Worten, die äußerste Gefahr im Geschick des Ge-stells gefährdet auch und in höchster Weise das ausgezeichnete Her-vor-bringen der Schönen Künste.

Die äußerste Selbstverstellung des entbergend-verbergenden Wesens der Unverborgenheit und das Vertreiben des Her-vor-bringens sind der Wesensgrund für die erste Hinsicht auf die höchste Gefahr. Gemäß dieser ersten Hinsicht ist der Mensch *nur noch* der Besteller des Bestandes, wird das Seiende *ausschließlich* als Bestand entborgen. Als Besteller des Bestandes geht der Mensch nicht mehr nur am Rande der Möglichkeit, das Entborgene allein zu verfolgen und sich an ihm zu versehen, sondern geht er "am äußersten Rand des Absturzes", worin er aus seinem eigentlichen Wesen abstürzt in die äußerste Verkehrung seines Wesens[28]. Diese zeigt sich, wenn er das Bestellen auch auf sich selbst richtet und auch den Menschen als Bestand nimmt (vgl. die Gentechnologie).

Den siebenten Frageschritt abschließend und zugleich den achten vorbereitend heißt es: "Die Herrschaft des Ge-stells droht mit der Möglichkeit, daß dem Menschen versagt sein könnte, in ein ursprünglicheres Entbergen einzukehren und so den Zuspruch einer anfänglicheren Wahrheit zu erfahren"[29]. Ein solches ursprünglicheres Entbergen wäre jenes, worin sich die Selbstverstellung des Waltens und Scheinens der Unverborgenheit in ein unverstelltes Entbergen kehrt. Ein solches Sichkehren aber wäre der Aufgang des *Rettenden* in der äußersten Gefahr. So ergibt sich als *achter Schritt* die Frage, inwiefern die höchste Gefahr das *Wachstum des Rettenden* in sich birgt[30]. Sollte sich erweisen, daß das Wachstum des Rettenden in der äußersten Gefahr wesenhaft

geborgen ist — und dieser Erweis steht an dieser Wegstation noch aus —, dann würde sich die Herrschaft des Ge-stells nicht darin erschöpfen, daß alles Leuchten und Scheinen der Unverborgenheit nur verstellt bleibt. Es wird die Vermutung ausgesprochen, daß "ein zureichender Blick in das, was das Ge-stell als ein Geschick des Entbergens ist, das Rettende in seinem Aufgehen zum Scheinen [zu] bringen" vermag[31]. Die Wendung '*was* das Ge-stell *...ist*' ist im Vorblick auf den letzten Frageschritt gesprochen, auf die Frage nach dem *Wesenssinn* des Ge-stells als des *Wesens* der Technik. Erst wenn sich der Sinn dieses Wesens zeigt, zeigt sich zugleich, inwiefern die höchste Gefahr als Wesen der Technik das Wachstum des Rettenden in sich bergen kann.

Im Hinblick auf das Rettende ist aber zweierlei auseinanderzuhalten: das noch verborgene Wachstum als das verborgen geschehende Wurzeln und Gedeihen und der eigentliche Aufgang des Rettenden.

Das geborgene Wachstum des Rettenden in der äußersten Gefahr zeigt sich nur dann, wenn bedacht wird, "inwiefern in dem, *was* die äußerste Gefahr *ist*, inwiefern im *Walten* des Ge-stells das Rettende sogar am tiefsten wurzelt und von dorther gedeiht"[32]. Fragen, *was* die äußerste Gefahr *ist*, heißt fragen nach dem *Wesenssinn* der äußersten Gefahr als des *Wesens* der Technik. Die Wendung '*was* die äußerste Gefahr *ist*' wird daher sogleich erläutert durch die Wendung 'im *Walten* des Ge-stells'. Aber das 'Walten' ist nicht schon die gesuchte Antwort, vielmehr soll der Sinn dieses Waltens erfragt werden. Als letzter Schritt auf dem Weg des Fragens nach dem Wesen der modernen Technik wird angekündigt, "noch helleren Auges in die Gefahr zu blicken". Denn diese ist das Wesen der Technik und in diesem soll das Wurzeln und Gedeihen des Rettenden erblickt werden. Der *neunte Frageschritt* fragt daher, "in welchem Sinne von 'Wesen' das Ge-stell eigentlich das Wesen der Technik ist"[33]. Zwar hat sich als Wesen der modernen Technik das Ge-stell und dieses als das Geschick der höchsten Gefahr gezeigt; noch nicht aber hat sich gezeigt, welchen Sinn hier das 'Wesen' hat. Aus diesem noch nicht enthüllten Wesenssinn soll sich erweisen, inwiefern die höchste Gefahr wesenhaft ein verborgen geschehendes Wachstum des Rettenden birgt.

Bevor dieser Wesenssinn positiv zum Aufweis gelangt, wird zunächst gezeigt, worin er nicht gesucht werden darf: Wesen meint hier nicht Wesen im Sinne von Gattung und essentia. Nach der Zurückweisung der geläufigen Bedeutung setzt die positive Bestimmung ein. Hier ergibt sich: Das Wesen ist das Waltende; insofern ist das Wesen das Wesende und als dieses ist es das Währende, *nicht* aber im Sinne des Fortwährenden, des Bleibenden und Sichdurchhaltenden, des ständig Anwesenden. Das Wesende ist ein Währendes nur, sofern dieses ein *Gewährtes* ist. Der Satz: "*Nur das Gewährte währt*"[34], will sagen: alles Wesen als Währendes ist selbst ein Gewährtes. Das Währende weist als das Gewährte zurück in ein Gewähren. Dieses Gewähren bzw. Gewährende ist das anfänglich und ursprünglich, d.h. erstlich Währende. Das anfänglich Währende ist als das Gewährende die entbergend-verbergende

Unverborgenheit in ihrem schickenden Walten. Die Unverborgenheit währt selbst als die Gewährende.

Das *Ge-stell* ist als das *Wesen* der modernen Technik das *Währende* und als solches das *Gewährte* des anfänglich (erstlich) Gewährenden. Als das Gewährte währt das Ge-stell *selbst als ein Gewähren*. Wie wir jetzt das anfängliche Gewähren und das Gewähren, als welches ein jedes Gewährte waltet, auseinanderhalten, so haben wir früher schon zwischen *dem* Geschick als dem schickenden Walten der Unverborgenheit und dem Schicken, als welches eine jede Schickung waltet, unterschieden. Der zwiefache Sinn des Gewährens wird darin besonders deutlich, wenn es heißt, daß jedes Geschick eines Entbergens "aus dem Gewähren und als ein solches"[35] sich ereigne: *aus* der anfänglich gewährenden Unverborgenheit und *als* eine gewährende Entbergungsweise. Die aus der erstlich gewährenden Unverborgenheit gewährte Entbergungsweise ist ihrerseits ein Gewähren, sofern sie dem Menschen erst seinen Anteil am Entbergen zuträgt. Auch das Ge-stell als die äußerste Gefahr, die das Wesen des Menschen und das Entbergen als solches (und mit diesem das her-vor-bringende Entbergen) in höchster Weise gefährdet, gewährt als eine geschickte Entbergungsweise. Insofern das Ge-stell den Menschen in das bestellende Entbergen herausfordert, *gewährt* auch es als das *Wesen* der modernen Technik, indem es dem Menschen seinen Anteil am herausfordernden Entbergen zuträgt. Diesen Anteil vollzieht er - wenn auch unerfahren - in seinem dreifach-einigen Eksistieren: dem Geworfensein aus dem Zuwurf, dem entfaltenden Entwurf und dem bestellenden Entbergen des Wirklichen. Diesen im Eksistieren vollzogenen Anteil *braucht* das Ereignis einer jeden geschicklichen Entbergungsweise. Daher ist der Mensch als Eksistenz der *Gebrauchte,* gebraucht aus dem Zuspruch der Entbergung, aus dem sichzuwerfen der jeweiligen Entbergungsweise. Aus dem Sichzuwerfen ist er dem Ereignis der schickenden, gewährenden Unverborgenheit *vereignet.* Er gehört sich nur selbst, sofern er Eigentum der gewährenden, sichzuwerfenden Unverborgenheit ist.

Jetzt erst ist die Besinnung dort angelangt, wo sie zu der gesuchten Einsicht kommt, inwiefern im Ge-stell und dessen äußerster Gefahr auch das Wachstum des Rettenden geborgen ist. Zunächst heißt es: "Das Gewährende, das so oder so in die Entbergung schickt, ist als solches das Rettende"[36]. Inwiefern es sich so verhält, das sagt erst der folgende Satz. Das Gewährende, das so oder so den Menschen in die Entbergung schickt, in der Weise eines her-vor-bringenden oder in der Weise eines herausfordernden Entbergens, das ist die erstlich gewährende Unverborgenheit selbst. Inwiefern aber zeigt sie, da sie doch in das herausfordernde Entbergen schickt und somit das Gefährdende ist, sich jetzt zumal als das Rettende? Der darauf antwortende Satz lautet: "Denn dieses läßt den Menschen in die höchste Würde seines Wesens schauen und einkehren"[37]. Worin aber besteht diese? "Sie beruht darin, die Unverborgenheit und mit ihr je zuvor die Verborgenheit alles Wesens auf dieser Erde zu hüten"[38]. Die äußerste Gefahr des Ge-stells ist, was ihren

Wesenssinn anbetrifft, das Gewährte der erstlich gewährenden Unverborgenheit. Als das Gewährte ist es selbst gewährend. Das erstlich Gewährende erweist sich in der gewährten Entbergungsweise des Gestells insofern als das Rettende, als es das Ge-stell und die äußerste Gefahr *als solche erfahren läßt im Denken.* Mit der Erfahrung des Wesens der Technik *als* der höchsten Gefahr *läßt* die gewährende Unverborgenheit den vom Ge-stell herausgeforderten Menschen in *jene* höchste Wesenswürde *schauen*, die ihm im Ge-stell und der äußersten Gefahr *noch entzogen* ist, die ihm jedoch *aus* dem *gewährenden* Walten der Unverborgenheit *gewährt werden kann.* Das Schauenlassen im Denken ist die *erste Weise*, in der sich das Rettende in seinem geborgenen Wachstum zeigt. Das Sichzeigen dieses verborgenen Wachstums ist selbst ein geschicklicher Wandel im Walten des Ge-stells, das sich aus seiner bisherigen Selbstverhüllung enthüllt und nunmehr zeigt *als* Ge-stell, *als* das Geschick der höchsten Gefahr. Indem es sich zeigt *als* die höchste Gefahr, zeigt es sich *als* das Gewährte eines Gewährens. Zwar zeigt sich dieses Gewährte als ein solches, worin dem Menschen die höchste Würde seines Wesens entzogen ist, doch gerade im Sichzeigen dieses Entzugs *zeigt sich* allererst diese höchste Wesensmöglichkeit, und zwar als eine solche, die als dem Menschen vorenthaltene gewährt werden *kann.* Die gewährende Unverborgenheit, die das Geschick der höchsten Gefahr gewährt, gewährt dann, wenn sie dieses Geschick *als solches* im Denken erfahren läßt, ein Schauen in das zwar noch nicht aufgehende, wohl aber geborgene Rettende. Dem Denken ist es gewährt, in die Möglichkeit eines anfänglicheren Entbergens zu schauen, in dessen Aufgang der Mensch in seine höchste Wesensmöglichkeit eksistierend einkehrt. Solange die rettende Entbergungsweise nur im Verborgenen wächst, läßt die gewährende Unverborgenheit den Menschen in seine höchste Wesenswürde nur denkend schauen. Wenn aber die rettende Entbergungsweise geschicklich sich ereignen und d.h. aufgehen sollte, dann würde der Mensch in seine höchste Wesensmöglichkeit nicht nur schauen, sondern in sie einkehren. Diese aber beruht dann darin, daß der Mensch gemäß der ursprünglicheren Entbergungsweise das Seiende derart entbirgt, daß er darin die Entborgenheit und die zu dieser gehörende Verborgenheit dieses Seienden hütet.

Der Vollzug des Denkens, das das geborgene Wachstum in der äußersten Gefahr denkt, gehört selbst in das geborgene Wachstum des Rettenden. Das Denken denkt nicht aus sich heraus, vielmehr denkt es das, was ihm als das Zudenkende gewährt ist. Gewährt ist ihm das Gestell und die höchste Gefahr. Indem diese sich enthüllt, gibt sie sich dem Denken anheim. Im Sichenthüllen der äußersten Gefahr als solcher für das Denken kommt zumal die Geborgenheit des Rettenden zum Vorschein. Dieses Zum-Vorschein-kommen geschieht nicht aus eigener Machtvollkommenheit des Denkens, wohl aber geschieht es für das Denken und insofern im Vollzug der denkenden Übernahme des zu denkenden Rettenden in der Gefahr. Das Denken des in der Gefahr geborgenen Rettenden hat vorerst den Handlungscharakter des

Wachsen-*lassens*. Im Wachsen und Wachsenlassen ist der mögliche Aufgang des Rettenden geborgen. Das denkende Wachsenlassen geschieht umwillen dieses möglichen geschicklichen Aufgangs.

Daß das Wesen der Technik *einerseits* Ge-stell und äußerste Gefahr ist und *andererseits* das Wachstum des Rettenden und somit den möglichen Aufgang eines rettenden Entbergungsgeschickes birgt, ist die *Zweideutigkeit* dieses Wesens. Auch dann, wenn das Ge-stell als solches im Denken erfahren ist, waltet es geschickhaft als das Herausfordern des Menschen in das Rasende des bestellenden Entbergens. In dieser Weise seines Waltens verstellt es denen, die das Wesen der Technik nicht erfahren, "jeden Blick in das Ereignis der Entbergung"[39]. Sofern ihnen jeder Blick in das Ereignis der Entbergung verstellt ist, gefährdet es den Bezug des Menschen zum Wesen der Unverborgenheit von Grund auf, so daß, der Mensch, ohne es zu erfahren, im äußersten Wesensabsturz eksistiert. Das ist der *eine Anblick*, den das Wesen der Technik dem Denken bietet. Der *andere Anblick* des Ge-stells beruht darin, daß es sehen läßt, wie auch noch das Ge-stell das Gewährte eines Gewährens ist und wie die gewährende Unverborgenheit die im gewährten Ge-stell dem Menschen entzogene höchste Wesensmöglichkeit, "der Gebrauchte zu sein zur Wahrnis des Wesens der Wahrheit"[40], geschickhaft im Sinne eines sich wandelnden Geschickes gewähren kann. Dieser zweite Anblick des Ge-stells läßt in den möglichen Aufgang des Rettenden blicken, der aber als solcher noch im Walten des Ge-stells verborgen ist.

Der Anblick des Unaufhaltsamen des Bestellens und der Anblick des Verhaltenen des Rettenden gehören zusammen. Ihre Zusammengehörigkeit ist die *geschickhafte Konstellation des Wesens der Unverborgenheit*, die die gegenwärtige Epoche bestimmt. Deshalb ist jetzt und fortan die Frage nach dem Wesen der Technik die Frage nach der Konstellation, in welcher sich die entbergend-verbergende Unverborgenheit als Ge-stell und d.h. als äußerste Gefahr und darin geborgenem Wachstum des Rettenden ereignet.

Mit dem Aufweis dieser Konstellation als der Nähe der äußersten Gefahr und des geborgenen Wachstums des Rettenden findet das Fragen nach dem Wesen der Technik seine vorläufige Antwort. Noch einmal wird in aller Prägnanz gesagt, was der denkende Blick in dieser Konstellation erblickt: Indem er in die äußerste Gefahr blickt, erblickt er das sich bergende Wachstum des Rettenden. Wenn nun betont wird, daß wir durch das Erblicken des Wachstums des Rettenden noch nicht gerettet sind, dann wird auch hier unmißverständlich geschieden zwischen dem im Verborgenen wachsenden Rettenden und dem Aufgang des Rettenden, worin wir allererst geschickhaft gerettet wären. Im Erblicken des verborgenen Wachstums des Rettenden ist das Denken aus der Konstellation des geschickhaften Wesens der Unverborgenheit angesprochen und aufgerufen, "im wachsenden Licht des Rettenden zu verhoffen"[41], d.h. hoffend den Aufgang des Rettenden zu erwarten. Solches Erwarten ist die Weise, wie das Denken *handelt* und in seinem Handeln Anteil hat am Wachstum und am möglichen Aufgang des Rettenden. Der Hand-

lungscharakter dieses Denkens ist das Hegen, d.h. aber das Wachsenlassen. Solches geschieht nur dann, wenn sich das Denken nicht nur einmal, sondern unablässig und immer fragender dem Wesen der Technik als dem Ge-stell und der äußersten Gefahr zuwendet. Denn nur in dieser fragenden Zuwendung kann das geborgene ursprünglichere Entbergungsgeschick dergestalt sich vorbereiten, daß es zu einem geschickhaften Aufgang kommt.

Die künstlerische Besinnung auf das Wesen der Technik als Vorbereitung auf die geschichtebildende Wesensmöglichkeit der Künste im technischen Zeitalter

Die Frage nach der Stellung der aus ihrem Wesen her gedachten Kunst in dem durch das Ge-stell und dessen äußerste Gefahr bestimmten Zeitalter wird dadurch vorbereitet, daß der höchste Gefahrcharakter des Wesens der Technik erneut herausgestellt wird. Das Wesen der Technik, das selbst eine Entbergungsweise ist, "bedroht das Entbergen"[42]. Der Sinn jener Entbergungsweise, die das Wesen der modernen Technik ist, ist die Selbstbedrohung des Entbergens in der Bedeutung der Selbstverstellung. Im Vortrag "Die Kehre" kennzeichnet Heidegger die Selbstverstellung des entbergend-verbergenden Wesens der Unverborgenheit als ein Sichkehren des Seins in die Vergessenheit seines Wesens, dieses als ein Sichwegkehren von seinem Wesen und dieses als ein Sichkehren gegen die Wahrheit seines Wesens[43]. Die höchste, die äußerste Gefahr waltet in der Weise dieses mehrfach gefügten Sichkehrens. Indem das Wesen der Technik als das Ge-stell das Entbergen bedroht, droht es "mit der Möglichkeit, daß alles Entbergen im Bestellen aufgeht und alles sich nur in der Unverborgenheit des Bestandes darstellt"[44]. Das Bedrohen des Entbergens sowie das Drohen mit der Möglichkeit, alles Entbergen im Bestellen aufgehen zu lassen, nehmen beide die zweite Hinsicht auf die höchste Gefahr wieder auf, von der wir gesagt haben, daß sie der Wesensgrund für die erste sei, die insofern in jene eingeschlossen ist. Anders gewendet heißt das, daß das Ge-stell als das Geschick der äußersten Gefahr droht, das her-vor-bringende Entbergen nicht nur zurückzudrängen, sondern weitgehend zu vertreiben. Da aber das künstlerische Schaffen ein ausgezeichnetes Her-vor-bringen ist, wird auch dieses aus dem Wesen der modernen Technik in höchster Weise gefährdet. Indes, sofern sich das Wesen der Technik *als* die äußerste Gefahr, als jene Bedrohung und Drohung zeigt, läßt es zumal die Geborgenheit eines Rettenden in der höchsten Gefahr sehen. Der Vortrag "Die Kehre" denkt das Sichbergen des Rettenden als ein Sichverbergen der "Möglichkeit einer Kehre, in der die Vergessenheit des Wesens des Seins sich so wendet, daß mit *dieser* Kehre die Wahrheit des Wesens des Seins in das Seiende eigens einkehrt"[45]. Die hier ins Auge gefaßte Kehre ist als Sichwenden jener zuerst genannten Kehre der Aufgang des Rettenden. In diesem Aufgang kehrt sich die "Vergessenheit des Seins zur Wahrnis des Wesens des Seins"[46]. Wenn es hoch

kommt, dann "stehen wir bereits im vorausgeworfenen Schatten der Ankunft *dieser* Kehre"[47], also des Aufgangs des Rettenden. Deutlich heißt es aber: "Wann und wie sie sich geschicklich ereignet, weiß niemand"[48].

Angesichts der höchsten Gefahr, die sich in jenem Bedrohen des Entbergens und Drohen mit der Möglichkeit der alleinigen Herrschaft der bestellenden Entbergungsweise überdeutlich zeigt, heißt es: "Doch menschliche Besinnung kann bedenken, daß alles Rettende höheren, aber zugleich verwandten Wesens sein muß wie das Gefährdete"[49]. Das Rettende ist das Gewährende als die gewährende Unverborgenheit, die je und jäh Weisen der Entbergung gewährt. Das Gefährdete ist insbesondere das dem bestellenden Entbergen entgegengesetzte, das her-vor-bringende Entbergen. Das her-vor-bringende Entbergen in seinen verschiedenen Weisen ist je ein Gewährtes der gewährenden Unverborgenheit. Als das Gewährte oder Zugewährende ist es in der äußersten Gefahr das Gefährdete. Höheren Wesens als das Gewährte ist das erstlich Gewährende. Dieses gefährdet zwar in der Weise des Ge-stells, aber als das Gewährende kann es die Gefährdung wenden in die neue Gewährung eines geschicklichen her-vor-bringenden Entbergens. Die erstlich gewährende Unverborgenheit ist als das Gewährenkönnen eines ursprünglicheren, eines her-vor-bringenden Entbergens das erstlich Rettende. Als solches ist das Gewährende höheren Wesens als die gefährdete, weil verweigerte Entbergungsweise des Her-vor-bringens, da es das vorerst Verweigerte gewähren kann. Das Rettende, die gewährende Unverborgenheit, ist, wenn es höheren Wesens ist als die gefährdete Entbergungsweise, zugleich verwandt mit der gefährdeten Entbergungsweise, da diese als vorenthaltene aus dem gewährenden Wesen der Unverborgenheit vorenthalten ist. Weil das Rettende als das erstlich Gewährende höheren Wesens ist als das gefährdete, weil verweigerte her-vor-bringende Entbergen, kann es das verstellt-verweigerte her-vor-bringende Entbergen gewähren als ein gegenüber dem bestellenden Entbergen anfänglicher gewährtes Entbergen.

Bedenkt die menschliche Besinnung, daß die erstlich gewährende Unverborgenheit *als gewährende* auch das Rettende sein kann, sofern sie eine ursprünglichere Entbergungsweise gewähren kann, die als solche uns aus der alleinigen Herrschaft des Ge-stells retten kann, dann muß sie *auch* bedenken, auf welchen Wegen das rettende Entbergungsgeschick seine Ankunft vorbereiten kann. Einer dieser Wege wurde bereits bedacht: der Weg des Denkens. Ein anderer Weg könnte die *Kunst* in allen Weisen unter Einschluß der Dichtung sein. Denn die Schönen Künste sind in ihren vielfältigen Weisen des her-vor-bringenden Entbergens gefährdet aus dem Seinsgeschick des herausfordernden Entbergens. Zwar ist auch die handwerkliche Technik als eine Weise des her-vor-bringenden Entbergens aus dem Ge-stell bedroht; weil aber das künstlerische Schaffen als ein Gegenüber dem herstellenden Her-vor-bringen ausgezeichnetes Her-vor-bringen in einem ausgezeichneten Bezug zur entbergend-verbergenden Unverborgenheit steht, ist es die

Kunst, die in diesem ihrem ausgezeichneten Unverborgenheits-Bezug ein *ausgezeichneter Weg* sein kann, auf dem sich das rettende Entbergungsgeschick ankündigt.

Aus dem Umkreis dieser Besinnung stellt Heidegger die Frage: "Vermöchte es dann vielleicht ein anfänglicher gewährtes Entbergen, das Rettende zum ersten Scheinen zu bringen inmitten der Gefahr, die sich im technischen Zeitalter eher noch verbirgt als zeigt?".[50] Was in dieser Frage im Blick auf die Schönen Künste von ihrer möglichen Stellung in dem durch das Ge-stell seinsgeschichtlich bestimmten Zeitalter gesagt wird, ist aus einem Wissen von Wesen der Kunst gesprochen, das seine reichste Entfaltung in der Kunstwerk-Abhandlung erfahren hat. Zur Frage steht, ob es vielleicht die Schönen Künste sind, denen als erste inmitten des Waltens des Ge-stells und der äußersten Gefahr ein ursprünglicheres, eben ein her-vor-bringendes Entbergen gewährt wird, so, daß sie die rettende Entbergungsweise zu einem ersten Scheinen bringen. Sollte es sich so verhalten, dann würde das Rettende nicht mehr nur im geborgenen Wachstum verbleiben, sondern darüberhinaus im Umkreis der Kunst zu einem ersten Aufgang gelangen. Die Wendung 'zum Scheinen bringen' denkt das ausgezeichnete Her-vor-bringen des künstlerischen Schaffens, wie es in der Kunstwerk-Abhandlung in seinem Strukturgehalt und in der Abhebung gegen das handwerkliche Her-vor-bringen zum Aufweis gelangt ist[51]. Das künstlerisch-schaffende Her-vor-bringen vollzieht sich- aus dem Dasein als dem Wesensraum des Menschen gedacht - als ein Empfangen der gewährten-zugeworfenen anfänglicheren Entbergungsweise in der Geworfenheit, als ein Entfalten des Zugeworfenen im Entwurf und als ein Vor-und-hinein-bringen des Zugeworfen-Entworfenen in das her-vor-zubringende Kunstwerk. Weil die zugeworfen-entworfene Entbergungsweise in das Kunstwerk vorgebracht ist, scheint das ins Kunstwerk gesetzte, d.h. gebrachte Entbergungsgeschehen in ihm und aus ihm. Ganz anders im handwerklichen Her-vor-bringen. In ihm wird die zugeworfen-entworfene Unverborgenheit nicht in das her-vor-zubringende Gebrauchsding her-vorgebracht, sondern in dessen Entborgenheit (Offenbarkeit) untergebracht. Während im Geschehen von Kunst das Entbergungs-Verbergungs-Geschehen der Unverborgenheit sich in einem ausgezeichneten Seienden, dem her-vor-zubringenden Kunstwerk einrichtet, um aus diesem ausgezeichneten seienden Stand heraus ursprünglish und anfänglich geschehen zu können, birgt sich im Her-vorkommen eines Gebrauchsdinges das Entbergungsgeschehen in dessen Entborgenheit. Diesen grundlegenden Unterschied im Entbergungs-Verbergungs-Geschehen des künstlerischen und des anfertigenden Her-vorbringens müssen wir bei allem, was im Technik-Vortrag von der Kunst und den Schönen Künsten gesagt wird, vor Augen haben. Sollten es die Schönen Künste sein, denen hier oder da jenes anfänglichere Entbergen gewährt wird, das in das Rettende verweist, dann setzten sie im Her-vorbringen ihrer Kunstwerke das Rettende ins Werk. Als so ins Kunstwerk gesetzt gelangte das Rettende im Kunstwerk zum ersten Aufgang. Weil

dieser Aufgang im Umkreis der Kunst geschieht, hätte er den ausgezeichneten Wesenscharakter des Scheinens. Das Scheinen der in das Kunstwerk her-vor-gebrachten Entbergungsweise ist die Weise, wie das Kunstschöne im Kunstwerk ist. Ein solches Her-vor-bringen von Kunstwerken als das Vor-bringen des Unverborgenheitsgeschehens in das Kunstwerk geschähe inmitten der Herrschaft des Ge-stells und seines äußersten Gefahrcharakters. Von diesem wird gesagt, daß er sich eher noch verberge als zeige. Das deutet darauf hin, daß das Wesen der Technik, das Ge-stell als das Geschick der höchsten Gefahr, bislang nur hier und da im Denken erfahren ist, daß somit das Wesen der Technik weithin noch in jener Weise waltet, in der sich mit der Gefahr auch das Wachstum des Rettenden *noch nicht* zeigt. In dieser Waltensweise herrscht das Rasende des Bestellens, erscheint es als unaufhaltsam.

Nachdem sich der Blick zuerst auf die Kunst in der seinsgeschichtlichen Epoche des Ge-stells gerichtet hat, wendet er sich nunmehr zurück auf die Stellung der Kunst in der ersten Epoche der abendländischen Seinsgeschichte. In dieser trug nicht nur die Technik, sondern auch die Kunst den Namen τέχνη, weil sich *beide* als ein her-vorbringendes Entbergen vollzogen. Das bedeutet zunächst einmal, daß in der griechischen Antike das künstlerische Schaffen als τέχνη eine Wesensnähe zur Technik hatte, während in der modernen Technik zwischen dieser und der Kunst die äußerste Ferne obwaltet, da die moderne Technik sich nicht als her-vor-bringendes, sondern als das entgegengesetztgerichtete herausfordernde Entbergen entfaltet. Im *Her-vorbringen* bestand die Nähe zwischen anfertigender Technik und Kunst. Trotz dieser Nähe blieben das anfertigende und das künstlerische Her-vor-bringen in einer wesentlichen Weise geschieden. Denn die Kunst ist "*jenes Entbergen, das die Wahrheit in den Glanz des Scheinenden her-vorbringt*".[52] Das künstlerische Schaffen bringt Kunstwerke nicht in vergleichbarer Weise hervor, wie das Anfertigen Gebrauchsdinge hervorbringt. Während das Handwerk Gebrauchsdinge und nur diese her-vorbringt, bringen die Schönen Künste vor allem die Wahrheit, d.h. die entbergend-verbergend geschehende Unverborgenheit des Seienden her-vor, nämlich her und vor in das werdende Kunstwerk. Alles Handwerkliche, das zum Her-vor-bringen des Kunstwerkes gehört, bleibt im künstlerischen Schaffen dem Vor-bringen der geschehenden Entbergung des Seienden unterstellt.

Im unmittelbaren Anschluß an die Erinnerung, daß in der griechischen Antike τέχνη auch jenes künstlerische Entbergen hieß, das im Unterschied zum anfertigenden Her-vor-bringen die Wahrheit als die Entbergung des Seienden her-vor-bringt, heißt es, daß in dem Wort τέχνη auch "das Hervorbringen des Wahren in das Schöne," auch "die ποίησις der Schönen Künste"[53] genannt wurde. Die *drei Wendungen* 'das Rettende zum ersten Scheinen bringen,' 'die Wahrheit in den Glanz des Scheinenden hervorbringen' und 'das Hervorbringen des Wahren in das Schöne' blicken der Sache nach auf das Selbe. Dieses Selbe ist die ausgezeichnete Her-vor-bringensweise in der Kunst. Das Scheinen und

der Glanz des Scheinenden nennen das Schöne im Umkreis der Kunst, das Kunstschöne als eine ausgezeichnete, als die *werkmäßige* Geschehnisweise von Wahrheit als Unverborgenheit des Seienden.

Doch diese Bestimmung des Wesens der griechischen Kunst will nicht sagen, daß das griechische Denken selbst, wenn es das Wesen der τέχνη bedachte und diese, wie Aristoteles, als ἕξις τις μετὰ λόγου ἀληθοῦς ποιητικὴ[54] faßte, die künstlerische τέχνη als jenes schaffende Bringen des Entbergungsgeschehens in das her-vor-gehende Kunstwerk gedacht habe. In seiner ersten Nietzsche-Vorlesung sagt Heidegger vielmehr: "Die große griechische Kunst bleibt ohne eine entsprechende denkerisch-begriffliche Besinnung auf sie, welche Besinnung nicht gleichbedeutend sein müßte mit Ästhetik"[55]. Innerhalb der ästhetischen Betrachtungsweise verschließt sich das Entbergungsgeschehen in der Kunst. In der genannten Vorlesung läßt Heidegger die Ästhetik in dem Augenblick beginnen, "da die große Kunst, aber auch die gleichlaufende große Philosophie zu ihrem Ende gehen"[56]. Es ist das Zeitalter Platons und Aristoteles, in dem "diejenigen Grundbegriffe geprägt werden, die künftig den Gesichtskreis für alles Fragen nach der Kunst abstecken"[57]: das Begriffspaar ὕλη and μορφή, Stoff und Form. Zweierlei gilt es somit festzuhalten. 1. Die große griechische Kunst findet in der griechischen Philosophie nicht jene Besinnung, die diesem ausgezeichneten Wahrheitsgeschehen entsprochen hätte. Eine solche Besinnung hätte im Blick auf das Wesen der ἀλήθεια die Kunst als das Sicheinrichten der Wahrheit in das her-vor-gehende Kunstwerk und das künstlerische Schaffen als das Vor-bringen der sicheinrichtenden Unverborgenheit in das her-vorzubringende Kunstwerk bedenken müssen. Denn solches Sicheinrichten und solches Her-vor-bringen des Unverborgenheitsgeschehens geschah in der großen griechischen Kunst. 2. Als die philosophische Besinnung auf die Kunst und das künstlerische Her-vor-bringen einsetzte, orientierte sie sich im handwerklichen Her-vor-bringen und schöpfte als Grundbegriffe die von Stoff und Form. In dieser Orientierung hält sich die platonisch-aristotelische Wesensbestimmung der τέχνη, des handwerklichen *und* des künstlerischen Her-vor-bringens. Zwar ist für Aristoteles die τέχνη eine Weise der ἀληθεύειν, des Entbergens, und zwar das her-vor-bringende Entbergen; aber das Entbergen wird nur im Blick auf die vier αἴτια und somit im Blick auf Stoff und Form gedacht, also nur als der entbergende Hervorgang des her-vor-zubringenden Seienden. Das ἀληθεύειν der τέχνη wird demnach nicht erfahren und gedacht aus dem Wesen als dem Walten der Unverborgenheit selbst.

Nachdem zuerst in einer allgemeinen Weise gesagt wird, daß in der griechischen Kunst ein Her-vor-bringen des Wahren in das Schöne geschah, wird anschließend dargetan, *als was* das Wahre der griechischen Kunst geschah. "Am Beginn des abendländischen Geschickes," d.h. in der ersten Epoche des ganzheitlichen abendländischen Seinsgeschickes, dessen vorerst letzte Epoche die des Ge-stells ist — in der Epoche der griechischen Antike stiegen "die Künste in die höchste Höhe des ihnen gewährten Entbergens"[58]. Die griechischen Künste — das sind hier vor

allem die Baukunst, die Plastik, die Malerei und die Dichtung als Epos, Tragödie und Lyrik. Welches ist das ihnen gewährte her-vor-bringende Entbergen? Inwiefern stiegen die griechischen Künste in ihrem schaffenden Her-vor-bringen in die höchste Höhe? Woran bemißt sich ihre Höhe? Diese Fragen beantworten sich aus der Benennung dessen, *was das Wahre* dieses künstlerischen Entbergens war. Die griechischen Künste "brachten die Gegenwart der Götter, brachten die Zwiesprache des göttlichen und menschlichen Geschickes zum Leuchten"[59]. Das 'sie brachten' muß in dem strengen Sinne des künstlerisch-schaffenden Vorbringens des Entbergungsgeschehens in das her-vor-zubringende Kunstwerk gedacht werden. 'Zum Leuchten' sagt dasselbe wie 'zum Scheinen' im Sinne des Schönen im Raume der Kunst. Die 'Gegenwart der Götter', das 'Zwiegespräch des göttlichen und menschlichen Geschickes' — das ist die griechische *Welt*. Das Wahre, das die griechischen Künste in das werkmäßige Scheinen her-vor-brachten, war das, was im Seinsgeschick der Griechen, im griechischen Entbergungsgeschick, als Welt sich öffnete. Welt ist das welthafte Ganze der das Seiende im Ganzen bestimmenden Sinnbezüge, denen gemäß das Seiende als innerweltlich und weltzugehörig unverborgen ist. Das Maßgebende der griechischen Welt war die sich öffnende Offenheit jener Bezugsganzheit, als welche sich die Zwiesprache zwischen den Göttern und Menschen entfaltete. Die Künste waren der herausgehobene Ort, in welchem die griechische Welt in ausgezeichneter Weise zum Scheinen gelangte. In der griechischen Epoche des abendländischen Seinsgeschickes war die Kunst "ein einziges, vielfältiges Entbergen"[60], ein 'einziges', weil das künstlerische Schaffen ermöglicht wurde durch das eine, einigende und einzigartige her-vor-bringende Entbergen der griechischen Welt; ein 'vielfältiges', weil das eine, einigende Welt-Entbergen sich in die vielfältigen Wege des Kunst-Schaffens mannigfaltigte. Das künstlerische Schaffen der griechischen Kunst war "fügsam dem Walten und Verwahren der Wahrheit"[61]. Es war fügsam dem Walten der Wahrheit, indem es sich aus dem gewährenden Zuwurf des griechischen Entbergungsgeschickes vollzog. Es war fügsam dem Verwahren der Wahrheit, sofern es das Zugeworfene entwerfend in das her-vor-zubringende Werk fügte und in solchem Fügen verwahrte. Dieses Verwahren heißt jedoch nicht Unterbringen, sondern ist ein Vor-bringen, so, daß das ins Kunstwerk verwahrte Unverborgenheitsgeschehen aus dieser Verwahrung heraus geschehen, d.h. scheinen und leuchten kann.

Die griechische Kunst war als einziges, vielfältiges her-vor-bringendes Entbergen fügsam dem Walten und Verwahren des griechischen Entbergungs- und Weltgeschickes. Damit war sie alles das nicht, als was für uns heute die Kunst ist. Für uns entstammt die Kunst vor allem dem Artistischen des Künstlers. Für uns sind die Kunstwerke Gegenstände des ästhetischen Genusses. Uns ist die Kunst ein Sektor des Kulturschaffens. Das Künstlerische verstehen wir weithin als das Artistische, als das formalkünstlerische Können eines Künstlers. Die Kunstwerke nehmen wir auf als die Leistung eines Könners. Sein künstlerisches Können fassen wir

auf als ein Vermögen des künstlerischen Subjekts. Die Bestimmung der Herkunft der Kunst aus dem Artistischen schließt die Ansetzung des Menschen und somit des Künstlers als Subjekt ein, das in sich eine Vielheit von Vermögen vereinigt. Zu diesen gehören auch das Vermögen der künstlerischen Einbildungskraft und der künstlerischen Formgebung des vorgegebenen Materials. Der Zugang zu den dem Artistischen des Künstlers entsprungenen Werken ist für uns das ästhetische Erlebnis. Die Auffassung und Bestimmung der Zugangsweise zum Kunstwerk als ästhetisches Erlebnis gehört in den Bezirk der Ästhetik. In der ersten Nietzsche-Vorlesung gibt Heidegger eine prägnante Wesensbestimmung der Ästhetik[62]. Die Ästhetik ist "diejenige Besinnung auf die Kunst, bei der das fühlende Verhältnis des Menschen zu dem in der Kunst dargestellten Schönen den maßgebenden Bereich der Bestimmung und Begründung abgibt"[63]. Das fühlende Verhältnis zum Kunst-Schönen ist einmal das die Kunstwerke hervorbringende Verhalten und ist zum anderen das empfangend-genießende Verhalten zu den hervorgebrachten Werken. Anders gewendet, innerhalb der Ästhetik wird die Kunst erfahren und bestimmt "im Rückgang auf den Gefühlszustand des Menschen, dem das Hervorbringen und Genießen des Schönen entspringt und zugehört"[64]. Das Kunstwerk wird bestimmt als der Träger des Schönen, wobei das Tragende der formbare Stoff und das getragene Schöne die Form des geformten Stoffes ist. Sofern es das Schöne trägt, ist das Kunstwerk zugleich der Erreger, der im ästhetischen Erleben den Erlebenden in den sinnlich-fühlenden, genießenden Zustand versetzt. Damit wird offensichtlich, daß das Kunstwerk gedeutet wird als das ästhetische Objekt für das ästhetisch erlebende Subjekt. "Maßgebend für seine Betrachtung ist die Subjekt-Objekt-Beziehung"[65], hier nicht als die theoretisch erkennende, sondern als die fühlende. Doch innerhalb der Betrachtungsart, die auf die Subjekt-Objekt-Beziehung fixiert ist, hält sich der Bereich der Unverborgenheit und Entbergung verschlossen. Wenn die Ästhetik auf dem Boden der Subjekt-Objekt-Beziehung steht, dann bleibt es ihr von ihren eigenen Voraussetzungen her verwehrt, die Kunst, das Kunstwerk, das künstlerische Her-vor-bringen und den verstehenden Zugang zum Kunstwerk aus dem Geschehen der Unverborgenheit her zu erfahren.

Für die gegenwärtige Kunst stellt sich die Frage, ob sich nur die Besinnung auf sie mit den Mitteln der Ästhetik versteht oder ob sich auch das heutige künstlerische Schaffen aus der Blickbahn der Ästhetik versteht. Und wenn die Vorstellung des Artistischen zur Vorstellungsart der Ästhetik gehört, so ist zu fragen, inwieweit sich das gegenwärtige künstlerische Schaffen selbst im Verstehenshorizont des Artistischen hält. Im Zusammenhang dieser Fragen ist der Satz bedeutsam: "in Wahrheit ist die Tatsache, ob und wie ein Zeitalter einer Ästhetik verhaftet ist, ob und wie es aus einer ästhetischen Haltung her zur Kunst steht, entscheidend für die Art und Weise, wie in diesem Zeitalter die Kunst geschichtebildend ist — oder ob sie ausbleibt"[66]. Damit ist doch gesagt, daß dort, wo die Ästhetik nicht nur die theoretische Besinnung

auf die Kunst, sondern auch das künstlerische Schaffen selbst leitet, die geschichtebildende Kunst ausbleibt. *Geschichtebildend* wäre die Kunst in unserer Zeit, wenn sie das Rettende inmitten der höchsten Gefahr zum ersten Scheinen brächte. Das Rettende aber wäre eine anfänglicher gewährte Entbergungsweise. Das künstlerische Schaffen, das das Rettende zum ersten Scheinen bringt, dürfte sich selbst nicht aus den ästhetischen Vorstellungsweisen deuten. Solange diese auch für das künstlerische Schaffen leitend bleiben, bringt dieses nicht die Bereitschaft für die Ankunft eines anfänglicher gewährten Entbergens auf.

Alles das, was die griechische Kunst noch nicht war, wodurch aber unsere heutige Haltung zur Kunst bestimmt ist, das Artistische, das Ästhetische und das Kulturschaffen, gehört in den Bezirk der Subjekt-Objekt-Beziehung. Zwar ist die Kultur nicht das Geschaffene des individuellen, wohl aber des gesellschaftlichen Subjekts.

Die Rückbesinnung auf die griechische Kunst abschließend, fragt der Text, was sie, die lediglich den schlichten Namen τέχνη trug, für kurze, aber hohe Zeiten war. Diese Frage wird nicht um ihrer selbst willen, sondern im Hinblick auf die Kunst unserer vom Wesen der modernen Technik geprägten Zeit gefragt. Die zusammenfassende Antwort lautet: Sie war ein her- und vor-bringendes Entbergen, so daß sie in die ποίησις gehörte. Sie brachte das griechische Entbergungs- und Welt-Geschick vor in die sich verschließende Erde der Werke, so, daß es aus den Werken in ausgezeichneter Weise geschah, also schien und glänzte und leuchtete es in der Weise des Kunst-Schönen. In dieser Antwort liegt die Frage beschlossen, ob auch die Künste unserer Zeit ein solches her- und vorbringendes Entbergen sind.

Leicht mißdeutbar ist der Satz, daß den Namen ποίησις zuletzt jenes Entbergen als Eigennamen erhielt, "das alle Kunst des Schönen durchwaltet, die Poesie, das Dichterische"[67]. In diesen gedanklichen Zusammenhang gehört eine Textstelle aus der ersten Nietzsche-Vorlesung: "Daß dieses Wort ποίησις im betonten Sinne der Benennung des Herstellens von etwas in Worten vorbehalten wurde, daß ποίησις als 'Poesie' vorzüglich der Name für die Kunst des Wortes, die Dichtkunst, wurde, ist ein Zeugnis für die Vorrangstellung dieser Kunst innerhalb der griechischen Kunst im Ganzen"[68]. Inwiefern aber durchwaltet die Poesie, das Dichterische, alle Kunst, also auch die Baukunst, die Bildkunst und die Tonkunst? Einem möglichen Mißverständnis vorbeugend, sei darauf hingewiesen, daß dies weder bedeutet, daß in allen anderen Künsten die Poesie als Dichtkunst steckt, noch, daß alle Künste auf die Poesie zurückgeführt, aus dieser hergeleitet werden müssen. So wird denn das Wort 'Poesie' nicht durch 'Dichtkunst' sondern im Text durch das 'Dichterische' erläutert. Dieses 'Dichterische' meint aber das, was in der Kunstwerk-Abhandlung das Dichten bzw. die Dichtung im weiteren Sinne genannt wird in der Unterscheidung zur Dichtung im engeren Sinne, zur Poesie[69]. Dichtung im weiteren Sinne ist das "Geschehenlassen der Ankunft der Wahrheit des Seienden"[70]. Dieses ist aber das

Wesen der Sprache[71]. Die Dichtung im weiteren Sinne ist als das Wesen der Sprache das Wesen der Kunst. Alle Kunst ist in ihrem Wesen Dichtung in dem ganz weiten Sinne von Dichtung. Wenn dieser weite Sinn in das Wesen der Sprache verweist, dann sind alle Künste und nicht nur die Sprachkunst im Wesen der Sprache verwurzelt. Die Dichtkunst als Poesie "ist nur eine Weise des lichtenden Entwerfens der Wahrheit, d.h. des Dichtens in diesem weiteren Sinne"[72]. Dennoch hat die Poesie als die Dichtung im engeren Sinne "eine ausgezeichnete Stellung im Ganzen der Künste"[73]. Die Poesie ist "die ursprünglichste Dichtung im wesentlichen Sinn", d.h. im weiten Sinne, weil sich in der Sprache für den Menschen überhaupt erst Seiendes *als* Seiendes offenbart[74]. Weil das Wesen der Sprache im Grundgeschehnis der Entbergung des Seienden beruht, "ist die Poesie, die Dichtung im engeren Sinne, die ursprünglichste Dichtung im wesentlichen Sinne"[75]. Diejenige Kunst, deren Werke die Sprachwerke sind, hält sich in einem Element, der Sprache, das "das ursprüngliche Wesen der Dichtung verwahrt"[76]. Darin zeigt sich eine ausgezeichnete Nähe der Poesie zum ursprünglichen Wesen der Dichtung, die dieser unter den Künsten eine Vorrangstellung gibt. Dieser Vorrang kommt darin zum Vorschein, daß etwa die Baukunst oder die Bildkunst "immer schon und immer nur im Offenen der Sage und des Nennens"[77] geschehen, d.h. in jenem Offenen, das sich öffnet im Geschehnis des Wesens der Sprache. In diesem Sinne werden die anderen Künste, die nicht selbst die Poesie sind, vom Dichterischen, vom Wesensgeschehen der Sprache, durchwaltet. Dadurch werden sie nicht zu Abarten der Poesie; vielmehr bleiben sie "eigene Wege und Weisen, wie die Wahrheit sich ins Werk richtet"[78]. Alle anderen Künste sind "ein je eigenes Dichten innerhalb der Lichtung des Seienden, die schon und ganz unbeachtet in der Sprache geschehen ist"[79].

Das Dichterische, die Dichtung im weiteren Sinne, als das Wesensgeschehen der Sprache "durchwest", d.h. durchwaltet jeden Weg des künstlerischen Schaffens[80]. Jede Weise des künstlerischen Schaffens, auch die Tonkunst, ist "Entbergung des Wesenden ins Schöne". Jede Weise des Her-vor-bringens der gewährten-währenden Entbergung des Seienden in das werkmäßige Scheinen wird durchwaltet vom Dichterischen als dem Wesen der Sprache. Sofern das Dichterische jede Kunst durchwaltet, bringt es das gewährte-währende Unverborgenheitsgeschehen des Seienden in den Glanz des am reinsten Hervorscheinenden, das das Kunst-Schöne ist. Alle Künste sind vom Dichterischen als dem Wesen der Sprache durchwaltet, aber nur eine unter ihnen bringt das Wahre, die gewährte Entbergung, in der Sprache selbst als dem Sprachwerk hervor. Deshalb trägt sie selbst den Eigennamen Poesie, Dichtung.

Nach dem Rückblick auf die griechische Kunst, die als gewährtes her-vorbringendes Entbergen des griechischen Welt-Geschicks vom Dichterischen in dem jetzt erläuterten Sinne durchwaltet war, wendet sich der Technik-Vortrag wieder der Stellung der Kunst im gegenwärtigen, durch das Gestell bestimmten Zeitalter zu. Zwei Fragen, die der Sache nach eine sind, richten sich an die Schönen Künste im Zeitalter der äußersten Gefahr. Es

ist dieselbe Frage, die vor dem Rückblick auf das, was die griechische Kunst einstmals war, ausgesprochen wurde. Es läßt sich fragen, ob die Schönen Künste in der Herrschaft des Ge-stells und der äußersten Gefahr bereits jetzt schon in das dichterische, also künstlerische Entbergen gerufen sind — gerufen aus dem Zuspruch der gewährenden, sich zuwerfenden Unverborgenheit. Es kann gefragt werden, ob das Entbergen, ob die gewährende Unverborgenheit die Künste jetzt schon oder in naher Zukunft anfänglicher in den Anspruch nimmt. Denn ein gewährtes dichterisches, d.h. Unverborgenheit des Seienden in geschichtebildender Weise geschehenlassendes Entbergen wäre ein anfänglicheres, ein ursprünglicheres Entbergen als das herausfordernde Entbergen. Wenn den Schönen Künsten jetzt oder in Zukunft ein anfänglicheres, ein dichterisches Entbergen gewährt werden sollte und wenn sie diesem Anspruch im Her-vor-bringen ihrer Werke entsprechen sollten, dann hegten sie an ihrem Teil, d.h. auf ihre eigenste Weise, das Wachstum des Rettenden, so, wie die denkerische Besinnung auf das Wesen der Technik und auf das Wachstum des Rettenden in der höchsten Gefahr auf die ihr eigene Weise das Wachstum des Rettenden hegt. Inwiefern hegten die Künste an ihrem Teil das Wachstum des Rettenden? Wenn sie das ihnen gewährte Entbergungsgeschehen schaffend vor-bringen in die zu schaffenden Kunstwerke, dann schiene das in die Werke gebrachte Unverborgenheitsgeschehen aus diesen Werken für uns, die wir uns diesen Werken zuwenden. Im verstehenden Zugang zu diesen Werken wäre unser Blick und unser Zutrauen in die gewährende Unverborgenheit neu geweckt. Schüfen die Künste Werke, die hervorgehen aus einem anfänglicher gewährten Entbergen, dann brächten sie das Rettende zwar nur innerhalb der Kunstwerke zum ersten Scheinen. Außerhalb des Bezirkes der Kunst waltete auch dann noch das Entbergungsgeschick des Ge-stells. Aber die Zuwendung zu solchen Kunstwerken weckte uns, die wir im Anspruch des Ge-stells stehen, den Blick in das Gewährende der schickenden Unverborgenheit und förderte insofern das Wachstum des Rettenden im Hinblick auf seinen möglichen geschickhaften Aufgang.

Das, was in jenen beiden Fragen im Hinblick auf die Künste im Zeitalter der Technik gefragt wird, ist die "höchste Möglichkeit" des Wesens der Kunst inmitten der äußersten Gefahr[81]. Wenn von der höchsten Wesensmöglichkeit der Kunst gesprochen wird, dann kann die Kunst offenbar in unterschiedlichen Möglichkeiten geschehen, die aber alle unter der höchsten Möglichkeit stehen. Woran bemißt sich diese höchste Höhe? Daran, ob und inwieweit sie dem geschicklich-geschichtlichen Augenblick entspricht, ein möglicherweise anfänglicher gewährtes Entbergungsgeschehen, worin sich das rettende Entbergungsgeschick ankündigt, in das Kunstwerk vor-zubringen. In diesem Sinne wären die Künste in unserer Zeit, die durch die äußerste Gefahr des Ge-stells gezeichnet ist, geschichtebildend. Das Maß für die Höhe der Wesensmöglichkeit ist die geschichtebildende Mächtigkeit der Kunst. Die Künste unserer vom Wesen der Technik bestimmten Zeit gelangten in ihre höchste, geschichtebildende Wesensmöglichkeit, wenn es ihnen gewährt wäre, ein

solches anfänglicheres Entbergungsgeschehen in das her-vor-zubringende Werk vor-zubringen, das aus dem Werk heraus schiene als das zunächst werkmäßig aufgegangene Rettende, das als dieses in die Möglichkeit des Aufgangs eines neuen rettenden Entbergungsgeschickes weist.

Wenn die gegenwärtig geschaffenen Kunstwerke nicht solche der höchsten Wesensmöglichkeit der Kunst in unserem Zeitalter der Technik sind, in welchem Entbergungssinn sind sie dann Kunstwerke? Steht vielleicht das gegenwärtige künstlerische Entbergen, wenn es nicht jener höchsten Möglichkeit entspricht, in einem anders zu kennzeichnenden Bezug zum Ge-stell? Vielleicht so, daß sie entweder geprägt sind durch den im Ge-stell waltenden Entzug des her-vor-bringenden Entbergens und der her-vor-zubringenden Welt? Oder gar so, daß das künstlerische Schaffen der Entbergungsweise des Ge-stells derart entspricht, daß das Schaffen das Herausfordern in sich aufnimmt?

Ob der Kunst in dem durch den äußersten Gefahrcharakter des Ge-stells gekennzeichneten Zeitalter jene höchste Wesensmöglichkeit, jene geschichtebildende Mächtigkeit, gewährt wird, "vermag niemand zu wissen"[82]. Darin spricht sich doch wohl der Zweifel daran aus, daß das gegenwärtige künstlerische Schaffen schon in das geschichtebildende dichterische Entbergen gerufen ist.

Außer *dieser* geschickhaften Möglichkeit, daß die gewährende Unverborgenheit inmitten der höchsten Gefahr der Künste anfänglicher in Anspruch nimmt, damit diese das Rettende zu einem ersten, werkmäßigen Scheinen bringen, wird eine *andere* Möglichkeit in den Blick genommen. Diese wird als eine solche eingeführt, vor der wir er-staunen können. Diese andere geschickhafte Möglichkeit besagt, "daß überall das Rasende der Technik sich einrichtet, bis eines Tages durch alles Technische hindurch das Wesen der Technik west im Ereignis der Wahrheit"[83]. Solange das Rasende der Technik sich einrichtet, lichtet sich nicht das Wesen der Technik, bleibt das Ge-stell in seiner äußersten Gefährdung als die Vergessenheit der Wahrheit, der Unverborgenheit des Seins verhüllt. Solches kann, wie hier, nur gesagt werden, weil sich das Wesen der Technik als das Sichkehren des Seins in die Vergessenheit seines Wesens für das Denken schon enthüllt hat. Indessen, diese Enthüllungsweise des Ge-stells *als* des Ge-stells, die dem Denken den Blick in das in der Gefahr geborgene Wachstum des Rettenden gewährt, besagt noch nicht, daß Ge-stell und äußerste Gefahr über das insuläre Denken hinaus geschickhaft vom Menschentum des Ge-stells erfahren ist. Eine solche geschickhaft ermöglichte Erfahrung wäre eine *neue* Waltensweise des Wesens der Technik. Im Vortrag "Die Kehre" heißt es: "*Ist* die Gefahr als Gefahr, dann ereignet sich eigens ihr Wesen"[84]. Die Betonung liegt auf dem 'als' und auf dem 'eigens'. Wenn die äußerste Gefahr *als* eine solche, *als* das Wesen der Technik, geschickhaft erfahren wird, dann wandelt sich in *dieser* Erfahrensweise die Waltensweise des Ge-stells. Das Ge-stell waltet dann als eine geschickliche Ereignisweise der ereignenden Unverborgenheit des Seins. Um einen Wandel in der bisherigen Waltensweise handelt es sich insofern, als sich die Vergessenheit des Wesens des

Seins in die Wahrnis des Seins kehrt[85]. Wenn das Wesen der Technik vom Menschentum, das in das bestellende Entbergen herausgefordert ist, *als* geschickliche Ereignisweise der ereignenden Unverborgenheit des Seins *erfahren* wird, ist es in seinem Wesen bereit für die Teilnahme am Aufgang eines neuen Entbergungsgeschickes, in welchem das Geschick des Ge-stells verwunden wird[86].

Inwiefern aber können wir vor dieser anderen Möglichkeit und nicht auch vor der zuerst in den Blick genommenen erstaunen? Wir erstaunen doch nur vor solchem, was in irgendeiner Weise schon *ist*. Jene zuerst genannte Möglichkeit, daß die Schönen Künste im Zeitalter der äußersten Gefahr das Rettende bereits zu einem ersten Scheinen bringen und darin geschichtebildend sind, *ist* noch in keiner Weise. Dagegen *ist* die zweite Möglichkeit bereits in einer gewissen Weise, so daß wir schon erstaunen können. Denn lange schon waltete das Wesen der modernen Technik. lange schon richtete sich das Rasende der Technik ein, ohne daß das Wesen der Technik *als* ein solches für das Denken zum Vorschein kam. Eines Tages aber lichtete sich das Wesen der Technik für das Denken. Das ist es, wovor das Denken, dem sich das Wesen der Technik enthüllt hat, jetzt schon erstaunt. Jetzt, da sich das Wesen der Technik erstmals als ein solches dem Denken gelichtet hat, zeigt sich dem Denken die geschickliche Möglichkeit, daß das Wesen der Technik eines Tages geschickhaft vom Menschentum, das jetzt noch unerfahren im Anspruch des Ge-stells steht, als Ereignisweise im Ereignis der Unverborgenheit erfahren wird. Die Wendung 'eines Tages' nennt einmal den 'Tag', an dem das Denken erstmals das Wesen der Technik erblickte, und nennt zum anderen den 'Tag', an welchem das Ge-stell nicht nur auf den Inseln des Denkens aus dem Ereignis der entbergend-verbergenden Unverborgenheit erfahren wird.

Wenn die Schönen Künste bislang noch nicht in das geschichtebildende Entbergen gerufen sind, dann müssen sie selbst auf diesen geschicklich-geschichtlichen Augenblick sich vorbereiten. Dazu bedürfen sie der *künstlerischen Besinnung*. Die *denkerische* Besinnung, die, sofern sich ihr das Wesen der Technik gelichtet hat, dieses Wesen als das Ge-stell und die äußerste Gefahr denkend erfährt, fordert die Künste auf, sich auf den Weg ihrer eigenen, der künstlerischen Besinnung zu begeben. Die Besinnung muß der Technik gelten, die das Zeitalter im ganzen und von Grund auf bestimmt. Die Kunst muß sich auf die Technik besinnen. Diese Besinnung soll eine wesentliche sein. *Wesentlich* ist sie allein, wenn sie sich nicht nur auf das Technische, sondern auf das *Wesen* der Technik besinnt, das selbst nichts Technisches ist. Die "wesentliche Besinnung" auf das Wesen der Technik muß vom Charakter einer 'entscheidenden Auseinandersetzung' mit diesem sein[87]. Eine solche wesentliche Besinnung und entscheidende Auseinandersetzung mit dem Wesen der Technik kann überhaupt nur "in einem Bereich geschehen, der einerseits mit dem Wesen der Technik verwandt und andererseits von ihm doch grundverschieden ist"[88]. Ohne Verwandtschaft mit dem Ge-stell hätte dasjenige, was die Auseinandersetzung vollbringen soll, keinen Bezug zu

dem, womit es sich auseinandersetzen soll. Ohne die Grundverschiedenheit, fehlte der Auseinandersetzung die Hinsicht, in der sie sich mit dem Wesen der Technik auseinandersetzen muß. Die Kunst ist ein solcher mit dem Wesen der Technik verwandter und von ihm zugleich grundverschiedener Bereich. Denn die Kunst ist als ein ausgezeichnetes her-vor-bringendes Entbergen mit dem herausfordernden Entbergen der Technik verwandt. Dieses hat seine Herkunft aus jenem. Aber gerade als her-vor-bringendes Entbergen ist die Kunst grundverschieden vom herausfordernden Entbergen, sofern das letztere dem her-vorbringenden Entbergen entgegengesetztgerichtet ist.

Als verwandt mit dem Wesen der Technik und zugleich grundverschieden von ihm ist die Kunst nur dann ein Bereich wesentlicher Besinnung und entscheidender Auseinandersetzung, wenn sich ihre Besinnung jener "Konstellation der Wahrheit" öffnet, nach der das Denken fragt[89]. Mit anderen Worten, das Denken ist es, das den Künsten das Wesen der Technik als jene geschickliche Konstellation des Wesens der Wahrheit zeigt, in der das unaufhaltsame des Bestellens und das Verhaltene des Rettenden zusammengehören. Das Denken hat gegenüber den Künsten die Aufgabe, deren Blick in das Wesen der Technik zu weisen, damit die Künste erfahren, worauf ihre Besinnung gehen, womit sie sich in ihrer Besinnung auseinandersetzen müsse. Diese Auseinandersetzung ist eine "entscheidende", weil sie teilhat an der Entscheidung, welches Entbergungsgeschick künftig bestimmend ist: das Entbergungsgeschick des Ge-stells oder aber ein anderes, in welchem das Ge-stell verwunden wird. Die Kunst ist nur dann ein Bereich der wesentlichen Besinnung auf das Wesen der Technik und der Auseinandersetzung mit diesem Wesen, wenn ihre Besinnung eingedenk ist jener Konstellation des geschicklich-geschichtlichen Wesen der Wahrheit, dergemäß die äußerste Gefahr des Ge-stells das Wachstum des Rettenden birgt. Im Blick auf diese geschichtliche Konstellation muß sich die Kunst mit der Technik auseinandersetzen. Die Kunst setzt sich nur dann mit der Technik auseinander, wenn sie die Technik aus jener geschichtlichen Konstellation der entbergend-verbergenden Unverborgenheit erfährt, die das Ge-stell in seiner äußersten Gefahr ist. Den Künsten im technischen Zeitalter wird vom Denken eine geschichtliche Aufgabe gewiesen, die Aufgabe der künstlerischen Besinnung auf das Wesen der Technik. Das bedeutet nicht, daß auch die Künste denken sollen wie das fragende Denken. Die künstlerische Besinnung können die Künste nur aus ihrem eigenen Wesen heraus vollbringen. Sofern sie diese Aufgabe als das ihnen geschicklich-geschichtlich Aufgegebene, ergreifen halten sich Kunst und Denken in einer Nähe auf. Das Wesen dieser Nähe ist der Bereich, in den beide mit ihrem Wesen versetzt sind. Dieser Bereich ist der einer Nachbarschaft von Kunst and Denken. Von dieser gilt das, was Heidegger von der Nachbarschaft von Dichten und Denken sagt, wonach diese "durch eine zarte, aber helle Differenz in ihr eigenes Dunkel auseinandergehalten" sind[90]. Zart ist die Differenz, weil sowohl die Kunst wie das Denken in einem ausgezeichneten Bezug zur Unverborgenheit stehen.

Die Gemeinsamkeit dieses ausgezeichneten Bezuges stiftet ihre Nähe als Wesensnähe. Daß diese Differenz zugleich eine helle ist, will aber sagen, daß weder die Kunst beim Denken noch das Denken bei der Kunst Anleihen macht, daß das Denken trotz der Nähe zur Kunst von ihr unübersteigbar geschieden ist und daß die Kunst trotz ihrer Wesensnähe zum Denken von diesem weggehalten ist. Alles künstlerische Schaffen der Gegenwart müßte seine Führung aus der künstlerischen Besinnung auf das Wesen der Technik gewinnen. Nur so bereiteten sich die Künste auf ihre geschichtebildende Aufgabe vor. Eine solche Besinnung schlösse ein, daß sich das Schaffen der so oder so gewährenden Unverborgenheit verdankt, statt an den Vorstellungsweisen der Ästhetik orientiert zu sein. Innerhalb der Nachbarschaft von Kunst und Denken besinnen sich die Künste auf jene geschichtliche Konstellation im geschichtlichen Wesen der Unverborgenheit, nach der das Denken fragt. Das Fragen ist das Eigene des Denkens, während das besinnliche Schaffen das Eigene der Künste ist.

Daß nach dem Wesen der Technik in einer betonten Weise gefragt wird, soll anzeigen, daß die rasende Ausbreitung des Technischen den Blick in das Wesen der Technik kaum zuläßt. Innerhalb der geschichtlichen Konstellation des Wesens der Wahrheit im technischen Zeitalter überwiegt das Unaufhaltsame des Bestellens, und zwar so, daß das Bestellen *als* die geschichtliche Entbergungsweise gar nicht erst erfahren wird. Das Fragen nach dem Wesen der Technik muß sich gegen das übermächtige Andrängen des Technischen einen Weg bahnen. Es schließt wesenhaft ein Fragen nach dem Wesen der Kunst ein, sofern dieses durch das Wesen der Technik in höchster Weise gefährdet ist. Indes, das Fragen nach dem Wesen der Kunst, das als eine ausgezeichnete Weise des Wahrheits- als des Unverborgenheitsgeschehens waltet, stößt ebenfalls auf einen Widerstand. So, wie die rasende Ausbreitung des Technischen und die sie begleitende instrumental-anthropologische Bestimmung der Technik sich in den Weg des Mitfragens nach dem Wesen der Technik stellt, so sind es die ästhetischen Vorstellungsweisen, deren Selbstverständlichkeit das Mitgehen auf dem Weg des Fragens nach dem Wesen der Kunst unterbindet. Die Ästhetik in all ihren Erscheinungsformen ist die verfestigte Meinung, daß die Blickbahn auf die Kunst und alles, was zu ihr gehört, das ästhetische Erleben des Subjekts ist, das durch das Kunstwerk als ästhetisches Objekt und Träger des Schönen in den ästhetischen Erlebniszustand versetzt wird. In dieser ästhetischen Subjekt-Objekt-Beziehung hat sich das Wesende der Kunst, das werkmäßige Entbergungsgeschehen, völlig entzogen und verhüllt. Jenes Denken aber, daß das Wesen der Kunst aus der entbergend-verbergenden Unverborgenheit als das Sicheinrichten dieser in das Kunstwerk erfährt, denkt den verstehenden Zugang zu den Werken der Kunst als die *Bewahrung*. Dort, wo die Ästhetik das Selbstverständnis des Künstlers sowie den Umgang mit den Kunstwerken leitet, wird das Wesende der Kunst nicht mehr 'bewahrt'[91]. Wenn hier gegen Ende des Technik-Vortrags vom Bewahren des Wesenden der Kunst, das durch die Ästhetik ausgeschlossen wird, gesprochen wird, so müssen wir dieses Bewahren in der Strenge

denken, in der es erstmals in der Kunstwerk-Abhandlung zur Bestimmung gelangte[92]. Bewahren ist als Grundwort das Gegenwort zum ästhetischen Erleben. Das Wesende der Kunst im Umgang mit dem Kunstwerk bewahren heißt: verstehend innestehen im werkmäßigen Geschehen der Entbergung des Seienden, sofern dieses Geschehen den Verstehenden anstößt, d.h. herausstößt aus dem Gewöhnlichen und hineinstößt in das ausgezeichnete, in das werkmäßige Entbergungsgeschehen.

Damit, daß das Wesen der Technik als Ge-stell und dieses als das Entbergungsgeschick der äußersten Gefahr im Denken erfahren ist, endet nicht das Fragen. Ge-stell und Gefahr bilden keine abschließende Antwort. Hier wie überall gilt der Wesenssatz vom Verhältnis zwischen Antwort und Frage: "Die Antwort auf die Frage ist wie jede echte Antwort nur der äußerste Auslauf des letzten Schrittes einer langen Folge von Frageschritten. Jede Antwort bleibt nur als Antwort in Kraft, solange sie im Fragen verwurzelt ist"[93]. Jede vorläufige Antwort führt zu einem erneuten Fragen, das durch jene Antwort fragender wird als das bisherige Fragen. Je fragender aber das Wesen der Technik bedacht wird, desto geheimnisvoller wird für das Denken das Wesen der Kunst. Denn je mehr sich das Denken in das Fragen nach dem Ge-stell und dessen äußerster Gefahr findet, desto vernehmlicher wird es aufgerufen, dem aus dem Ge-stell bedrohten Wesen der Kunst sowie der Möglichkeit nachzufragen, daß der Kunst aufgrund ihres ausgezeichneten Wesensverhältnisses zur schickenden Unverborgenheit zuerst ein ursprünglicheres Entbergen gewährt wird, so, daß die Schönen Künste im Her-vor-bringen ihrer Werke das außerhalb der Kunst noch verborgene andere, rettende Entbergungsgeschick zu einem ersten Scheinen bringen.

Im fragenderen Bedenken des Wesens der Technik nähert sich das Denken der äußersten Gefahr. Je näher es dieser kommt, desto heller "beginnen die Wege ins Rettende zu leuchten"[94]. Denn je schärfer sich die höchste Gefahr *als* Gefahr zeigt, desto klarer erscheint auch das geborgene Wachstum des Rettenden in der Gefahr. Die Wege, die in das Rettende leuchten, sind Wege, die in den möglichen Aufgang des rettenden Entbergungsgeschickes führen. Der eine dieser Wege ist der Weg der fragenden Besinnung, des fragenden Wachsen-lassens des Rettenden. Der andere Weg, der sich dem Denken zeigt, ist der Weg der künstlerisch-schaffenden Besinnung auf das wachsende Rettende in der äußersten Gefahr. Das Denken, dem sich dieser zweite Weg im Bedenken des Wesens der Technik und seines Verhältnisses zum Wesen der Kunst zeigt, weist den Schönen Künsten diesen Weg als den ihren in dem durch das Wesen der Technik geprägten Zeitalter. Diesen gewiesenen Weg zu beschreiten, ist allein Sache der Künste. Was sie auf diesem Wege ihrer künstlerischen Besinnung auf das wachsende Rettende in der äußersten Gefahr erfahren, können sie ihrerseits dem Denken kundtun. So käme es zu jenem Gespräch zwischen den Künsten und dem Denken, das Heidegger stets in seinem vielfältigen Umgang mit den Künstlern erhofft und gesucht hat. Die Wege, die in das Rettende führen, zeigen sich aus der Gegend der äußersten Gefahr und des sie bergenden Rettenden. Die

Wege, die das Denken und die Künste beschreiten, sind als Wege dieser Gegend deren Eigentum. Nur sofern die Gegend der äußersten Gefahr diese Wege freigibt, können sie vom Denken und von den Künsten begangen werden. Diese Wege führen nicht von der Gegend weg, sondern führen in sie hinein, hinein in das mögliche Wachsen und Aufgehen des rettenden, das Wesen der Technik verwindenden Entbergungsgeschickes.

Auf die Frage, worin sich das rettende Entbergungsgeschick entfaltet, gibt der Vortrag "Die Kehre" Antwort. Im Geschick des Ge-stells, worin sich die entbergend-verbergende Unverborgenheit, die Wahrheit des Seins, in die Vergessenheit gekehrt und diese selbst sich verhüllt hat, im Geschick des Ge-stells, worin das Seiende als bestellbarer Bestand entborgen wird, ereignet sich "die Verwahrlosung des Dinges"[95]. Diese waltet aus dem äußersten Welt-Entzug, der die geschickliche Waltensweise von Welt im Ge-stell ist. In der Verwahrlosung der Dinge werden diese nicht in ihrem weltversammelnden Anwesen zugelassen. Aufgang des Rettenden hieße dann, daß sich jene Vergessenheit des Seins kehrt in die Wahrnis des Seins, daß sich jener Welt-Entzug in die Ankunft von Welt (als Geviert von Himmel und Erde, Sterblichen und Göttlichen) wendet[96]. Seiendes, das aus solcher Ankunft von Welt entborgen wird, ist nicht mehr als Bestand, sondern als Weltgegenden versammelndes Ding unverborgen. Sollten die Schönen Künste inmitten der Herrschaft des Ge-stells in ein anfänglicheres, dichterisches Entbergen gerufen werden, dann würden sie die Einkehr von Welt als das Rettende in ihren Werken zu einem ersten Scheinen bringen.

Je deutlicher sich die Wege ins Rettende zeigen, desto fragender wird das Denken, das, indem es das Wesen der Technik als das waltende Entbergungsgeschick der äußersten Gefahr bedenkt, auch die Möglichkeit der Kehre in ein anderes, rettendes Entbergungsgeschick denkt.Weil solches Fragen auf einem Weg geschieht, der nicht vom Denken methodologisch vorausentworfen, sondern für das Fragen aus der Gegend der entbergend-verbergenden Unverborgenheit freigegeben wird, *fügt* sich das fragende Denken dem, was sich ihm als zu beschreitender Weg lichtet und zuspricht. In diesem Sinne ist das Fragen die Frömmigkeit als Fügsamkeit des Denkens. In der Wendung von der Fügsamkeit des Denkens ist jener Sachverhalt, den Heidegger erstmals im § 32 von "Sein und Zeit" unter dem Namen des hermeneutischen Zirkels zum Aufweis gebracht hat, weitergedacht. Dem fragenden Denken, das sich selbst in seiner Grundhaltung der Fügsamkeit versteht, zeigt sich das Wesen der Technik als Ge-stell und äußerste Gefahr; ihm zeigt sich das Wesen der Kunst als das geschichtebildende Sicheinrichten des Geschehens der Entbergung des Seienden in das her-vor-zubringende Werk; ihm zeigt sich die Stellung der Künste im technischen Zeitalter einerseits als äußerste Bedrohung der Kunst durch das Ge-stell und andererseits als die Möglichkeit, daß es die Künste sein könnten, denen inmitten der Herrschaft des Ge-stells zuerst ein ursprünglicheres Entbergen gewährt wird, das sie schaffend vor-bringen in die her-vor-

zubringenden Werke, damit es aus diesen zu einem ersten geschichtebildenden Scheinen gelange.

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12. A.a.O., S.11.
13. A.a.O., S.11 fünfter Abs. bis S.14 erster Abs.
14. A.a.O., S.12
15. Aristoteles, Ethica Nicomachea VI, cap.3, 1139 b 15f.
16. A.a.O., cap.4, 1140 a 20f.
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19. A.a.O., S.19.
20. Ebd.
21. Ebd.
22. A.a.O., S.20.
23. A.a.O., S.21
24. A.a.O., S.23 dritter Abs. bis S.25 dritter Abs.

25. A.a.O., S.25 vierter Abs. bis S. 28 zweiter Abs.
26. A.a.O., S.26.
27. A.a.O., S.27.
28. A.a.O., S.26.
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31. A.a.O., S.28.
32. A.a.O., S.29, Hervorhebungen v. Verf.
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34. A.a.O., S.31.
35. A.a.O., S.32
36. Ebd.
37. Ebd.
38. Ebd.
39. A.a.O., S.33.
40. Ebd.
41. Ebd.
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76. Ebd.; auch: Gesamtausgabe. ebd.
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TRUTH AS DISCLOSURE: ART, LANGUAGE, HISTORY

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One of Heidegger's life-long aims was to undercut the representationalist picture of our human situation, along with its objectifying outlook on reality and its subjectified picture of the self. Representationalism tells us that we are essentially minds or subjects set over against a world of objects, and that our task is to correctly represent those objects in our ideas and theories. Truth is then seen as the correspondence between our representations and the objects assumed to exist out there in the world. Heidegger's strategy for dealing with these traditional assumptions is to suggest that representationalism results from a "forgetfulness" of the underlying conditions that let objects, ideas, criteria of correctness and subjects show up in the first place. This forgotten background is named by such words as "worldhood," "clearing," "lighting," "opening" and "presencing." It can be retrieved from oblivion, Heidegger suggests, only by working out a transformed way of understanding ourselves, the world and truth—an alternative ontology which, in the vocabulary of *Being and Time* at least, is more "fundamental" than the representationalist ontology so pervasive in traditional metaphysics.

What characterizes this alternative ontology is an understanding of Being as an *event* or *happening* which first lets things come-to-presence in various ways. Being is thought of not as a pregiven state of affairs which subsequently reveals itself, like the seed that displays itself in the flowering plant. Instead, Being just is the complex event of emerging-into-presence itself. For this reason, Heidegger rejects the traditional opposition between Being and appearance. For the early Greeks, he says, "Being means appearing." Because what something *is* is inseparable from its "self-manifestation," its way of "showing itself," "[a]ppearing is not something subsequent that happens to Being. Appearing is the very essence of Being."[1] And since Being, as an issuing forth from concealment, is a "becoming" of what is, "appearance as appearing is the becoming of Being" (IM 115). Only because becoming is seen as the bringing-to-fulfillment

of one's potential can Pindar say, "May you become what you are" (IM 101).

Borrowing a term from Charles Taylor, I will call this Heideggerian understanding of Being an "expressivist" ontology. The term "expression" here is supposed to capture the way something only becomes *what it is* through its concrete realization in a specific form. We can find this expressivist ontology in Heidegger's recurrent descriptions of how an entity of some sort emerges out of an initially inchoate and unstructured background and, in doing so, defines and realizes its own Being and the Being of what surrounds it. I shall call such an entity an "exemplary being" if it discloses a world while simultaneously making manifest the conditions for any world-disclosure. This expressivist ontology is already evident in *Being and Time*, where Dasein is described as the arena in which beings come to show up in familiar ways. And it reappears in the descriptions of the Greek temple in "The Origin of the Work of Art," the bridge that lets the banks of the stream "emerge *as* banks" for the first time in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," and the jug that gathers together the fourfold in "The Thing."

Events of this sort are said to bring about an emergence of truth understood as *aletheia*: the interplay of disclosure and concealment. Truth regarded in this more original way, according to Heidegger, is what first lets entities show up *as* what they are, and it therefore underlies and makes possible the traditional view of truth as correct representation. When truth is seen not as correspondence to reality, but as an unfolding event through which reality first emerges, the whole idea of representation comes to appear as a side-effect of a more basic "self-manifestation" of Being. My goal in what follows is to sketch out the role played by the expressivist ontology and the aletheiac conception of truth in Heidegger's descriptions of human existence, artworks, language and history. This sketch should display the underlying continuity of his earlier and later criticisms of representationalism. But it also points to what is most deeply troubling in Heidegger's thought: the lack of any solid basis for critically evaluating a world-defining disclosure of truth.

I. Being-in-the-world

The concept of expressivism provides a helpful way of clarifying the description of Dasein as agency found in *Being and Time*. It is important to keep in mind that, although Dasein is called an "entity," it should not be thought of as an object or thing in any sense. Heidegger explicitly rejects

the Cartesian conception of a human as a "center of experiences and actions." In the flow of everyday agency, he claims, one can come across "one's own Dasein" only when one "*looks away* from 'experiences' and the 'center of [one's] actions,' or does not yet 'see' them at all. Dasein finds itself proximally in what it *does* . . ."(BT 155). It is also wrong to think of Dasein as an individual distinct from others. In average everydayness, where one generally "does not distinguish oneself from others," our Being is defined by the ways we are " 'manifest' in the 'with-one-another' of publicness" (BT 154, 422). In this sense, *Jemeinigkeit* or "mineness," understood as the integrity and cohesiveness of a self, is a task to be accomplished rather than a "given" accompanying all our experience. Heidegger therefore says that being a "Self" is " 'only' . . . a *way of Being* of [the] entity" whose most primordial Being is being-in-the-world (BT 153; my emphasis).

Instead of thinking of Dasein as an object of any sort, Heidegger recommends we think of it as a "happening" or a "becoming"—the unfolding "movement" of a life-course "*stretched along* between birth and death" (BT 426). Because, as everydayness, we *are* what we *do* in realizing our being-in-the-world, Heidegger characterizes human existence as an ongoing life-story which "brings itself to fruition" (*sich zeitigt*) in its expressions throughout its life. We can understand this use of the term "expression" by contrasting it with the picture of agency that follows from the representationalist model. On the representationalist view, human agency is to be understood by distinguishing "inner" motivations or intentions (the agent's beliefs and desires) from the "outer" bodily movements that are caused by those motivations. To say that an action is an expression, on this view, would be to say that it is an external display of some pregiven inner mental events or states. In explaining the action, we read backwards from the physical movements to the agent's originating intentions—saying something, for example, is treated as a "speech act" to be explained in terms of the speaker's intentions. This model assumes that intentions and other mental contents exist and are identifiable independently of the outer bodily movement: if we had direct access to people's intentions, we could dispense with the verbal utterance in grasping what they want to say.

On the kind of expressivist view Taylor finds in Heidegger, in contrast, this way of privileging the inner and treating the outer as something secondary and derivative is untenable. To say that for the most part we *are* what we *do* is to say

that our identity as agents only comes to be realized and given content in our concrete ways of being manifest in the world. This conception of expression becomes clearer when we think of the kinds of personality traits we often turn to in making sense of a person's actions. A friend's spontaneous gift, for example, is encountered as a manifestation of her character as a kind and generous person. But the character traits of kindness and generosity themselves are not usually regarded as merely external "signs" of some inner mental states. On the contrary, we normally encounter this person's actions and gestures as *constituting* her kindness—as definitive of her *being* as the generous, warm person she is. The amiable look, the gentle touch on the shoulder, the way of being available in times of trouble—these *present* kindness; they "body it forth" in public space, exuding an aura of steadiness and solicitude. Her style of comportment, so to speak, "lets-kindness-be" as her way of being present in the world. It *is* her kindness, just as my generally being on time for appointments *is* my being a punctual person. The distinction between the mental and the bodily generally has no role to play here—anything, or nothing, might be "going through her mind" when she acts in her familiar, considerate ways. Questions about "what is really going on in her mind" arise only when there are breaks or inconsistencies in the smooth flow of her concrete expressions in the world. But, when such questions arise, they make sense only against a backdrop of life in which people generally just are what they do.

If our identity comes to be defined and given content only in what we do in the world, we can see why Heidegger says that the *Being* of Dasein is something that is "impending" and not yet realized. Our self-constituting activity is a "projection" into the future, an ongoing process that will be completed only at the end of our lives. Since each of our actions contributes to the realization of our identity as a totality, Heidegger defines the Being of Dasein as "being-*toward*-the-end" or "being-*toward*-death." When I ignore the baby's crying, for example, I am constituting myself as a neglectful or uncaring parent, regardless of what sorts of good intentions I may have in my more reflective moments. If I keep this up throughout my life, it will be true of my identity that, in the end, this is the kind of parent I am. Thus, the description of human agency as a finite, future-directed projection captures the way our lives embody an "anticipation of completion" made concrete through our actions. Human existence is teleological not in the sense of having some

pregiven goal to realize, but as having before it the task of defining its Being as a totality.[2]

Dasein's future-directedness—its "self-projective being-towards its ownmost ability-to-be" (BT 236)—is always "thrown" into a familiar life-world from which it draws its possibilities of self-interpretation. Our own life-stories only make sense against the backdrop of possible story-lines opened by our historical culture. As a parent, I find myself stuck with responsibilities I generally take up along the guidelines of standards and norms embedded in the practices of "the They." In this sense, our life-happenings are woven into what Heidegger calls the "co-happening . . . of a community, of a people" (BT 436). This shared background of intelligibility, this "unanimity of world-understanding" (BP 297), is the source of the "fore-structure of understanding" that gives us a prior "fix" on the world and predefines our possible ways of being involved in it.

The expressivist picture of human agency as thrown projection is the basis for Heidegger's early account of how an entity—Dasein—brings about an event of truth. First, Heidegger describes how Dasein's self-understanding is made concrete by what he calls "interpretation," that is, its everyday dealings with contexts of equipment. Through interpretation, we "explicitly appropriate" the totalities of significance disclosed in understanding by letting things stand out *as* such and such in relation to our projects. This "*as*-structure" of interpretation lets the familiar world emerge-into-being as what it is. But, secondly, who *we* are is something that comes-into-being only through our transactions with the world. Heidegger says that, "in addressing itself to something interpretively, [Dasein] expresses *itself* too; that is to say, it expresses its *Being at home with* the ready-to-hand . . ." (BT 460). It follows that our agency both helps to constitute the clearing of the public world and gives content to who we are as agents involved in that world.

The description of Dasein's agency is the basis for the definition of "truth" as *aletheia* in *Being and Time*. Dasein is said to be "in the truth" to the extent that its future-directedness opens a space of possibilities where things emerge-into-presence *as* counting or mattering in familiar ways. Only within the disclosure opened by our attuned expressiveness can entities be encountered, statements made, and criteria of correctness established.

What is problematic in this conception of truth as disclosure is how to make sense of the notion of "untruth." Heidegger tries to fill this gap by offering an account of the distinction

between truth and untruth in terms of the distinction between authentic and inauthentic ways of existing. We are in untruth, he suggests, to the extent that, as falling, we are lost in the "forgetfulness" of everyday "making present." This forgetfulness is inevitable if we are to focus on the tasks at hand. As Heidegger says, "The self must forget itself if, lost in the world of equipment, it is to be able 'actually' to go to work and manipulate something" (BT 405). Because this forgetting is unavoidable if we are to be agents at all, Dasein is always "in untruth." What is insidious, however, is the way this first-order forgetfulness is compounded by a second-order forgetting in which Dasein "not only forgets the forgotten but forgets the forgetting itself" (BP 290). In other words, one forgets that one's current involvements are made possible only by shutting out all sense of the background conditions that let things emerge into presence in the first place. When this happens, we relate to the entities that show up in our current concerns as if they were the final, all-embracing truth about reality, and we accept the world articulated by the They as "the only game in town." This falling forgetfulness "results in a dimming down of the possible as such" (BT 239)—that is, it conceals the extent to which the worldhood of the world is something we *do*, and it thereby covers over the way our world and our lives are genuinely *at stake* for us in what we do.

If inauthenticity is a way of life that conceals "the possible as such," an authentic existence is one which makes manifest the possible *as* possible. The authentic individual seems to be pictured as an exemplary being whose way of living provides a "perspicuous presentation" (in Wittgenstein's phrase) of what is involved in world-disclosure. Authenticity is characterized by clear-sightedness or transparency (*Durchsichtigkeit*) about what is "constitutive for existence" (BT 187). It therefore "does violence" to the complacency of the commonsense understanding of things by breaking away from the tranquilization of average everydayness. As "authentic historicity," authentic agency seizes on its past as a "heritage" to be appropriated in realizing a communal "sending" or "destiny" (BT 438). Only such a self-focused and coherent style of living discloses what is at stake—and *that* something is at stake—in our shared "co-happening" in the world. When Heidegger claims that the "ontological 'truth' of the existential analysis is developed on the ground of the primordial existentiell truth" of authentic existence (BT 364), then, he suggests that the temporality of Being in general can be grasped only by understanding what is embodied in

such an exemplary way of life. This image of truth as what is made manifest in an exemplary being—a being which illuminates the event of world-disclosure in a new, more focused way—reappears in the essay, "The Origin of the Work of Art."

II. Art and Truth

The "turn" in Heidegger's thought after *Being and Time* is at least partly a shift from describing Being as what is disclosed by human practices to thinking of it as what "gives itself" to humans and first makes human existence possible. In the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Being is described as an "overpowering surge," an "appearance" which lets entities show forth in a "lighting" or "*truth* in the sense of unconcealment" (IM 109). "In appearing," Heidegger says, Being "gives itself an aspect," and it is only because of this that we can come to encounter things "from this or that point of view" (IM 102, 104).

But it is also clear that Being's self-manifestation is not something that could occur without humans. Things can show up *as* counting or mattering in some way only because humans, responding to what becomes manifest, articulate a field of significance which lets things show up with some determinate identity, demarcations and stability. The more-than-human "is made manifest and made to stand" through the "gathering" and "collecting collectedness" brought about by a historical people. "Human-being is *logos*," Heidegger writes, "the gathering and apprehending of the Being of beings" that "opens beings *as* sea, *as* earth, *as* animal" (IM 171, 157). For this reason, "the unconcealment of Being is not simply given. Unconcealment occurs only when it is achieved by work: the work of the word in poetry, the work of stone in temple and statue, . . . the work of the *polis* as the historical place in which all of this is grounded and preserved" (IM 191).

In the essay on art, it is clear that the exemplary being that expresses itself and realizes an event of truth is not Dasein, but is rather the work of art itself. In standing forth, Heidegger says, the work of art "first clears the openness of the opening into which it comes forth" (PLT 62), and it thereby lets both the world and humans come to be what they are. The Greek temple, for example, is not just an embellishment tacked on by humans to a pregiven form of life. Heidegger says that "men . . . and things are never present and familiar as unchangeable objects, only to

represent incidentally also a fitting environment for the temple, which one fine day is added to what is already there." On the contrary, the temple, "in standing there, first gives to things their look and to humans their outlook on themselves" (PLT 42-3). It is only through the world opened by the work that humans can come to appear on the scene as people of a particular sort: "Only this lighting [opened by the work] grants and guarantees to us humans a passage to those beings that we ourselves are not, and access to the being that we ourselves are" (PLT 53).

"The Origin of the Work of Art" introduces two crucial themes that expand our understanding of the expressivist ontology. First, Heidegger describes how a great work of art can open a new world for a people, a new manifestation of the aspects of things that can count for a community. The work is defined as a *Gestalt* which displaces what had come before and thereby produces a new "placing" (*Stellen*) and "framework" (*Ge-stell*) for a people (PLT 64). Through the work, Heidegger says, "what went before [the commonplace, the familiar, the ordinary] is refuted in its exclusive reality" (PLT 75). As a result, what is at stake in life is lit up in a way that "transport[s] us out of the realm of the ordinary" and "into the openness" of a new world (PLT 66). We might consider as an example the first depictions of the death of Christ on the cross that emerged in the eleventh century. By disavowing the imagery of "Christ the King" and letting Jesus appear as human, the crucifix opened the possibility of a this-worldly life of self-abnegation and humility as the meaning of a Christian existence. Such a work therefore transformed the Christian community's way of life and redefined the sorts of people they could be.

The second important development in this essay is the account of how a world-defining entity can make manifest an "original strife" in truth between lighting and concealment. Heidegger points out that any emergence of truth always involves a concealment to the extent that Being can present itself under an aspect only by displacing other possible ways of encountering things. This initial concealment, like the first-order forgetting of *Being and Time*, is inevitable if there is to be any clearing or lighting at all. What produces "confusion" and "error," however, is a second-order concealment, a "dissembling" which conceals the fact that the clearing is achieved only through this initial concealment. Dissembling occurs, Heidegger says, when "Being cloaks itself *as* appearance insofar as it shows itself *as* Being" (IM 109; my emphasis). In other words, when the aspects of things that

show up in the clearing are taken for granted as the last word about the way things are, we are set adrift in the assurance that there are no real alternatives to what presents itself as self-evident and commonplace in the current world. Because any clearing runs the risk of this sort of trivialization and leveling-down, Heidegger says that dissembling "metes out to all lighting the indefeasible severity of error" (PLT 55).

The work of art is an exemplary disclosure of truth because it counteracts this tendency toward dissembling by embodying in itself an "opposition" between world and earth. On the one hand, it opens a world, understood as "the clearing of the paths of the essential guiding directions with which all decision complies" (PLT 55). But, on the other hand, by preserving the earth, described as "the not-yet-revealed, the un-uncovered," it "brings out what is as yet undecided and measureless [in this world], and thus discloses the hidden necessity of measure and decisiveness" (PLT 60, 63). Only because it safeguards what defies assimilation into its world can it disclose what is involved in taking a stand in the world it discloses; as Heidegger says, "Every decision . . . bases itself on something not mastered, something concealed, confusing; else it would not be a decision" (PLT 55).

Thus, the world brought to realization by a work of art is not a static "grid" that fixes once and for all how things can show up for us. By harboring the earth as what can never be fully mastered by this world, the work holds out a challenge to future generations of "preservers" whose decisions will contribute to defining and realizing what is yet only potential in that work. In this way, El Greco's painting of the crucifixion takes up the "strife" in the new understanding of Christianity by setting the all-too-human Christ against an eery background filled with forebodings of the breakthrough of an unworldly light. It therefore bodies forth the event of appearing *as* appearance—that is, as the emergence of an aspect that simultaneously conceals—and so it sets future preservers the task of coming to terms with the tensions made manifest in the work. As an exemplary event of truth, the work of art reveals what is at stake in life by defining a "projection" or "sending" that only comes to realization in its ways of being appropriated through the stands taken on it by future generations. The very *Being* of the work, then, is seen as something impending and yet to be realized.

III. Language as Disclosure

At the end of "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger tells us that "[a]ll art, as the letting happen of the advent of the truth of beings as such, is essentially poetry" (PLT 72). Thus, the truth-disclosing role of artworks can be understood only in the light of Heidegger's interpretation of poetry and of language in general. In *Being and Time*, language had already played a pivotal role in opening the clearing in which entities show up. According to this early work, "discourse," regarded as "addressing and discussing entities," is an essential structure of Dasein's openness onto a world, its way of "*ex*press[ing] itself," as being "already 'outside' " when it understands (BT 205). These attuned expressions articulate a background of intelligibility which prestructures our actions and our ways of taking things in the familiar life-world.

The centrality of language in disclosing a shared world is developed more clearly in the writings of the thirties. There we find that "human-being is *logos*," and *logos* only becomes concrete as language. Words call forth beings "in the structure of their collectedness," Heidegger says, and they thereby define how things can count in the world of a historical people: "The word, the name, restores the emerging entity from the immediate overpowering surge to its Being and maintains it in this openness, delimitation and permanence" (IM 172). Language itself first lets beings become manifest *as* what they *are*. For this reason, "naming does not come afterward, providing an already manifest entity with a designation" (IM 172). Instead, naming first *invokes* or *elicits* entities as the types of things that can stand out in a clearing: "Language, by naming beings for the first time, first brings beings to word and to appearance. Only naming nominates beings *to* their Being *from out of* their Being" (PLT 73, my emphasis). Naming is therefore seen as the making-manifest of those aspects of things that can count for a community—the articulation of an "*as*-structure" that discloses a world.

Heidegger claims that this articulation occurs most primordially in great works of poetry. We can see what this means by tracing his description of how literary works arise out of what he calls the "saying" of a people. Saying (*die Sage*) is defined as a "showing" that "pervades and structures the openness of the clearing" where anything can "show, say [and] announce itself" (OWL 126). As a "renunciation of all the dim confusion in which a being veils and withdraws itself," it is a "projecting of the clearing in which announcement is

made of what it is that beings come into the open *as*" (PLT 73-4). Heidegger suggests that, because this primordial saying is a "composing" (*dichten*) of truth for a community, it can be thought of as poetry (*Dichtung*) in the broadest sense of this term (PLT 74). As "the saying of the unconcealment of beings," language is "the primordial poetry in which a people poetizes or composes [*dichtet*] Being" (IM 171). The background of poetic saying sketches out an initial understanding of how things can show up in a world, and so it opens up the sending for a historical people. Yet Heidegger also notes that language can become stale and flat, no longer issuing a "call" to us: "everyday language," he says, "is a forgotten and therefore used-up poem, from which there hardly resounds a call anymore" (PLT 208).

Great literary works have the ability to rejuvenate this background of primordial saying, transforming it into a new "truth" for a community. Speaking of a tragedy, Heidegger says that the work does not just enact something already known and familiar; instead, it brings to realization events *as* counting in a particular way for a people. "The literary work, *originating in the sayings of a people . . . transforms the people's saying* so that now every living word fights the battle and puts up for decision what is holy and what unholy, what great and what small, what brave and what cowardly . . ." (PLT 43). The idea here seems to be that the literary work draws on an inchoate and confusing sense of things embodied in the background "saying" of a people (where *Sagen* should still be heard in what Heidegger calls its "natural, essential sense" of "sagas," "legends," "traditions" [OWL 123]), and it transforms these legends into a "truth" that establishes "measure," boundaries and direction for a world.

A great poetic work has the ability to resist the tendency toward forgetfulness in everyday language because it sustains the tension between lighting and concealment, world and earth. When Heidegger says that, in great poetry, the word comes to speak while still preserving "the naming power of the word" (PLT 46), I take this to mean that the poetic word invokes an "explicit" outlook on things (an *as*-structure) while still continuing to evoke what must remain concealed in the world it discloses. The poem is a "projective saying . . . which, in preparing the sayable, simultaneously brings the unsayable as such into a world" (PLT 74). In other words, it counteracts the tendency toward "dissembling" in any world by preserving what resists totalization in that world. As an example we might consider Sophocles' *Antigone*. The *Antigone* draws on and transforms the background of legends and sayings of

the Greeks in order to make manifest the transition that occurred in Greece from the world of the *oikos* or household, with its basis in kinship and blood bonds, to the *polis* with its ruler and citizens. In the clash between Antigone and Creon, it defines what is at stake in the *polis*-world by offsetting the new world against the now muted older ways of the household. In this event of truth, what had been amorphous and inconclusive in a people's saying is crystallized and focused, so that now the issues of tyranny, solidarity and the renunciation of the old ways are put up for decision for the Greeks. The work defines the situatedness or dwelling of the Greeks while sketching out the guidelines for the essential decisions they confront.

Heidegger's expressivist ontology is apparent in this description of great poetic works. The poem is an exemplary being which, emerging into presence from an inchoate background, both lets entities stand forth *as* such-and-such and evokes what is still concealed in this event. It thereby makes manifest what is involved in an event of truth: the interplay of disclosure and concealment. Since poetic saying opens the arena in which humans and their environment come to light, language cannot be thought of as a human creation. "Language is not a work of human beings," Heidegger says; rather, "language speaks. Humans speak only insofar as they co-respond to language" (PT 25). Humans "are used for bringing soundless saying to the sound of language," and the poet speaks in a genuine way only because he or she hears what language says (OWL 126-9). Yet Heidegger makes it clear that language in this deeper sense can never be detached from actual natural languages. For "[a]ctual language at any given moment is the happening of this saying, in which a people's world historically arises for it . . ." (PLT 74). Our spoken language, because it is molded by the "great poetry by which a people enters into history" (IM 171-2), always contains the resources from which a "new beginning" can be achieved in future poetic works. Seen in this way, language is not a synchronic "system" or "code," but is an ongoing event which realizes its potential only through the course of its historical unfolding.

IV. History as the Happening of Truth

Our reflections on Heidegger's discussions of art and language therefore lead to an understanding of truth as an historical event. Artworks, and especially poetry, initiate a "new beginning" that redefines history: "Wherever art happens . . . a thrust enters history, history either begins or

starts again" (PLT 77). It is important to see that history is not conceived here as a sequence of events in the past leading up to the present. On the contrary, as *Being and Time* had claimed, history " 'happens' out of [the] future" (BT 41) in this sense: past events only come to be defined and realized *as* what they are in the ways they are "brought to fruition" by a people. This is why Heidegger speaks of the poetic work as a "projective saying" in which "the concepts of an historical people's essence, i.e., of its belonging to world history, are preformed for that people" (PLT 74). By sketching out in advance the guidelines for possible decision and "measure," the work "transport[s] a people into its appointed task," giving them an "endowment" (PLT 77). Consequently, the poetic work predelineates the sending or destiny to be taken up and accomplished by future generations of preservers: "in the work," Heidegger claims, "truth is thrown toward the coming preservers, that is, toward a historical humanity." Because the truth of the work relies on its appropriation by those whose world it defines, "a work is in actual effect as a work only when we . . . bring our own nature itself to take a stand in the truth" it discloses (PLT 74-5).

As a result, history is described as essentially futural in the sense that it is seen as a *quest*, inaugurated by an exemplary world-defining being, whose significance and content is realized solely through the way it is carried forward by future generations. Heidegger had argued for this understanding of history as essentially future-directed in his earliest writings, where he claimed that, in order to understand history as a cohesive "context of effectiveness and development" (FS 369), we must see it as adding up to something as a totality. Only on the basis of some vision of the overall direction history is taking, some sense of where things are going, can we *select* what can count as historically relevant in interpreting the past. Thus, historiography operates within a hermeneutic circle: events are identifiable and make sense only in relation to some projected overview of the meaning of the whole. It follows, then, that a vision of our sending or destiny is an unavoidable regulative idea which makes possible "historicity" understood as the experience of cumulativeness and continuity through time. It is because history is regarded as essentially futural that "authentic historicity" is defined in *Being and Time* as the ability to encounter one's past as a heritage, filled with potential and promise, which should be "repeated" or "retrieved" in undertaking the task of realizing a shared

destiny. History is the teleological structure of human existence writ large.

This teleological understanding of history is developed more forcefully in the writings of the thirties. Our aim in posing the question of Being, Heidegger tells us, is "to restore humanity's historical being-there—and that always includes our own *future* being-there in the history allotted to us—to the power [*Macht*] of primordially opened Being" (IM 41-2). For the German people, this requires "retrieving the beginning of our historical-spiritual existence in order to transform it into a new beginning" (IM 39). But a historical community can "win back [its] roots in history" and "wrest a destiny" from its "vocation" only if it "takes a creative view of its tradition" (IM 38-9). In other words, it is only by creatively reinterpreting their legends, sagas and traditions in the light of some overarching vision of the future—by transforming them into a "heritage"—that a people can achieve a new beginning, a new disclosure of truth that will give their actions a *point* and a *place* in history. For this reason, history is defined as "a happening which, *determined from out of the future*" appropriates the past for the purposes of the present (IM 44, my emphasis).

Throughout Heidegger's writings, then, history appears as a kind of narrative schema which enables a people to weave together their life-happenings into a cohesive, shared story. On the basis of a projected future, it focuses what is at stake in our thrownness into the world, and so opens the way to more clear-sighted action in the present. Because it defines a *mythos* that organizes and shapes the past in order to let it count *as* such-and-such, Heidegger says that the knowledge of "history . . . , if it is anything at all, [is] mythology" (IM 155). And, since "myth" means "making appear," it follows that *mythos* and *logos* say the same thing (WCT 10). To grasp our power of mythologizing is to understand that history is as much something we *make* as it is something that happens to us. The authentic grasp of history, by illuminating our own complicity in any emergence of truth, also displays the historical nature of truth in general.

We can now see more clearly why Heidegger claims that linguistic works are the master arts, and that all other arts happen only in the space opened by poetry. For artworks disclose truth in a way that is essentially *discursive*. A painting or statue can serve as an exemplary, world-defining work only because it embodies a tacit narrative schema of the sort which becomes fully articulate through language. This narrative schema comes to be filled in and given content by

those "coming preservers" who bring to articulation its still "confusing" and strife-ridden message. On this view of the historical nature of truth, truth is not seen as correct representation, but as an ongoing "presentation" in which a community takes up the challenge set for it by a work and undertakes the task of realizing the potential it embodies. Springing from a "beginning [which] already contains the end latent within itself" (PLT 76), an event of truth enables a community to weave its history into a coherent, future-directed story, and it thereby gives them a sense of place and purpose in the world.

Needless to say, with our knowledge of how this conception of truth paved the way to Heidegger's involvement with the Nazis, we are inclined to reject it out of hand today. With its faith in a world-historical "destiny" to be realized by seizing on current "possibilities," it seems to embody the worst of imperialism and voluntarism. One natural way of trying to rule out the risks inherent in this conception of truth is the tendency, found in certain poststructuralists, to reject all forms of historical totalization as well as political activism guided by a master vision of how things should turn out. Yet it seems to me that attempts to formulate an alternative to Heidegger's picture of truth as a future-directed event embody risks of their own. In response to these attacks on eschatological totalization we should ask the following question: Does the fact that totalization can lead to totalitarianism give us any reason to think that dispersal and fragmentation will *protect us* from totalitarianism? Here I suspect Plato's analysis still holds good: where divisiveness and dissension reign, the result is a vacuum that will be filled by a tyrant. Given this risk, it may be that the utopian moment in Heidegger's expressivism—this "Heideggerian hope"—still offers us a better way of understanding our situation in the world than its current contenders.

NOTES

[1] Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 101, henceforth cited as IM. In addition, I use the following abbreviations for Heidegger's works: *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982) = BP; *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) = BT; *Frühe Schriften* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1972) = FS; *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper & Row, 1971) = OWL; *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971) = PLT; *The Piety of Thinking*, trans. James G. Hart and John C. Maraldo (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976) = PT; *What Is Called Thinking?* trans. J.

Glenn Gray and F. Wieck (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972) = WCT. I often revise the translations for the sake of consistency and clarity.

[2] I discuss this conception of Dasein as teleological in chapter 3 of *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983), and in "Heidegger's 'Authenticity' Revisited," *The Review of Metaphysics*, December, 1984, 321-339.

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ON THE WAY TO A PHENOMENOLOGY OF WORLD[1]

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Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, originally formulated the task of phenomenology with the maxim, "to the things themselves." The call of this maxim is only meaningful, however, given the presupposition that a bias normally rules our relation to things and obstructs our access to them. Martin Heidegger, Husserl's greatest successor, interpreted this bias as the overall modern-day attitude with respect to things, namely with the conception of all things as objects, a conception that has become self-evident for us. As the preposition "*gegen*" contained in the concept "*Gegenstand*" shows, objects are defined by standing "over against" or "toward" us, that is, as being related to humans who are representing subjects.

This "subjectivizing beings into mere objects"[2] contradicts the fundamental conviction upon which our entire life is based. This conviction is characterized by Husserl as the "natural attitude" in his methodologically fundamental work, "*Ideen I*" from 1913. In this attitude, with complete self-evidence, we believe that, at first, the being of things does not depend on whether we humans have something to do with them or not. We believe that things then subsequently fall into the network of relatedness concerning us humans, when we make them into objects of our knowing and acting. Included in the preposition "*gegen*" is also the notion that, because they encounter us as something independent, the being of objects is directed "against" our representation. We can use the phrase "in itself," a phrase that in this case functions as a counterconcept to "for us" or "for me," to clearly express the notion that the being of things exceeds representational relations.

In the natural attitude, the relation of humans to things consists in the subject's being convinced of the object's being-in-itself. If we remain by this conviction, the meaning of the maxim "to the things themselves" seems clear: with the word "itself," the maxim is directed to the "in itself" of "things," and the maxim entails the call to do justice to the independence of things from the representing subject. But the compliance with this call runs into a fundamental difficulty because the denial of the relatedness of things to the human subject remains, as is the case with every denial, dependent upon that which denies it. For this reason, as long as it only negatively characterizes the contrary of the expression "for us," the use of the concept "in itself" cannot secure the independence of the being of objects from the subject representing them. This can only be the case when this expression "in itself" also conveys a "residing-in-itself" *(Insichruhen)* of things not to be understood as an object independently facing a subject.

As long as being-in-itself does not have the meaning of such a residing-in-itself, one must assume a representing subject positing things in such a way that they appear to this subject as something existing "in itself." But as such, being-in-itself proves to be a being achieved by subjective representation. The "standing over against" of objects constitutes itself – as neokantianism formulates it – in the subject. But one can also understand the maxim "to the things themselves," with Heidegger, as a directive against such an interpretation of the being-in-itself of things. As such, the maxim entails the call to allow things their true unrelatedness to subjects, and that means doing justice to their authentic being-in-itself, to their residing-in-itself.[3] Understood in this way, the maxim is a call to battle against subjectivism. Husserl, since the time of *Ideen I*, assigned to phenomenology the task of explaining the constitution of objects and thereby consequently adopted the subjectivistic language of neokantianism. In this way, according to Heidegger, Husserl deviates from the way to an authentic being-in-itself of things, a way nonetheless already inaugurated by Husserl himself with the maxim "to the things themselves."

Ultimately, the antisubjectivistic critique of Husserl must resort to the natural attitude, for which the being-in-itself of things is absolutely self-evident. But the conviction that these or those things exist "in itself" can also deceive us. For this reason, the natural attitude is also the primary source of our biases. If phenomenology accepted without further examination the natural attitude's basic conviction concerning the being-in-itself of things, it would be acting contrary to the spirit of freedom from bias, and it is in this spirit that the phenomenology of Husserl was born. On the other hand, honest thinking cannot act as if this basic conviction were not at all the case. The task of a critical philosophy can therefore only consist in explaining how the natural attitude reaches this conviction. This explanation can lead to the conclusion that the being-in-itself of things is nothing other than the result of a constituting performance remaining necessarily uncomprehended within the natural attitude. But understood in an antisubjectivistic way, the maxim "to the things themselves" is directed against this explanation; the maxim rather calls us to bring to light a justification that withstands the inspection of critical philosophy and rehabilitates the authentic being-in-itself of things, their residing-in-itself.

One would however misunderstand this call if it is believed that one must omit the thing's relatedness to humans in favor of its being-in-itself. If this were the case, it would already be predecided that being-in-itself must be understood as the negation of being-for-us, and the possibility of conceiving it as a residing-in-itself would not be held open in a prejudice-free way. The denial of relatedness to humans would amount to a realism that falls back behind Kant's transcendental turn. A phenomenological ontology, therefore,

can only take its departure from the relatedness of things to humans.[4] But it must as such pose with new attentiveness the following question: in what way do things appear to humans so that they encounter us as being-in-itself? This is the original question of Husserl's "phenomenology" as a "science of appearing." "Appearing," which is the concern of phenomenology, is the self-showing of being-in-itself in the human encounter with the world and with things.

As a methodological directive for the concrete analysis of appearing so understood, the maxim "to the things themselves", "zu den Sachen selbst," calls on us to locate the original, sense-endowing experiences referred to derivatively by the sense-content of our conduct. When we take this call to the maxim itself, we must ask what the word included in it, the word *"Sache,"* "thing," originally means. Translated into Greek, the word thing means χρῆμα or πρᾶγμα. Πρᾶγμα is connected to πράττειν, to act, and characterizes that to which our action is directed. Human conduct is action in the sense that it can bring its aims to language. To achieve its aims, action requires appropriate means. These are the things with which action is preoccupied, the πράγματα or χρήματα. The Greek language distinguishes between both words because there are two kinds of means for action. The primary means are the possibilities for action that we take into consideration, in conversation with others or in consulting ourselves, in order to reach any given aim. It is when we make the effort to consult one another collectively concerning such possibilities, that these possibilities become "concerns;" they become concerns in the sense of objects of negotiation. This is what is meant by the word πρᾶγμα.

In order to take care of a concern, we almost always require appropriate material things. These form the means for our action because we make use of and apply them; the Greek here is χρῆσθαι and from this word comes χρῆμα. The χρήματα, those things that are applicable, are only second-order means for action because they serve the first-order means, the πράγματα as concerns. But although the χρήματα are not the primary means for action, they move to the foreground of interest in the subjectivistic examination of things because they are perceptible, material objects and because such objects most strongly awaken the impression that their being possesses an independence over against our representations. It is therefore no coincidence that Heidegger took his departure from things of use – from the χρήματα – in his phenomenological analysis of our being-in-the-world in *Being and Time*, and that he examined how they are "at hand" as equipment for human Dasein.

As is well known, this analysis implicitly entails a critique of Husserl's thesis that the original appearing of things consists in their being perceivable. But given that Heidegger remains in his examination oriented to the things

we perceive rather than to what is specifically not given in this way because we discuss them as concerns, as πράγματα, he can be seen, despite this critique, in a hidden harmony with Husserl. Heidegger, like Husserl, follows the self-evident assumption serving as a the departure point for modern thinking that the meaning of "thing" can be registered from perceivable things. This dependence on subjectivism is more obvious with Husserl only to the extent that he holds perception to be the examplar of the human encounter with all that is.

Heidegger later explicitly stressed that the being of things is not exhausted in being equipment at hand for humans and that the thing or *das Ding* originally received its name from the germanic *"thing,"* that is, a gathering for the consultation of common concerns. That the primary things for acting humans are πράγματα is already suggested by Heidegger in this observation. That did not hinder him, however, from elucidating up through his later work, the being of the thing extending beyond mere being-at-hand on the basis of such material things as the temple, the jug, the rock, the bridge, etc. Despite this limitation in Heidegger's thinking, it can be seen phenomenologically with his help that we experience, both in the appearing of things at hand and in the appearing of concerns (which is another kind of appearing), a being-in-itself that has the character of a residing-in-itself.

Both experiences of authentic being-in-itself, to be illustrated in the following considerations, are based in our holding ourselves open for the world. For this reason, an analysis of these experiences that takes leave of subjectivism necessarily leads to a phenomenology of the world. But one should not in such an analysis be seduced into neglecting the essential difference between the world of χρήματα and the world of πράγματα. In accordance with this difference, the way to a non-subjectivistic phenomenology must fork into two directions. The sketch of this way can, however, only take its departure from Heidegger, for with the analysis of equipment in *Being and Time*,[3] Heidegger found the formulation overcoming the subjectivism of the constitution analysis by posing a new explanation of the perception-oriented, Husserlian account of the being-in-itself of things. Consequently, it is necessary to enter into this decisive transition between Husserl and Heidegger.

With perception, a thing appears to an "intentional" consciousness directed to objects in referential contexts, in horizons. These horizons are the clearances – *Spielräume* – that keep possibilities ready for me as to how *I can* continue my respective perception. Our freedom begins for Husserl with this "I can," and subjectivity means freedom. The horizonally marked possibilities of unfolding the freedom of our "I can" (Husserl speaks of *Vermöglichkeiten*, "potentiabilities") have in this sense a subjective character. Because every horizon refers to further horizons, they belong

together in an all-encompassing context of reference, to the world as universal horizon. We have at the outset an awareness of the world because we can transcend every horizon in which we are currently oriented, and because the "and so on" of this movement of transcendence never ceases. Our "I can" unfolds at first for Husserl in this movement within the encompassing clearance of horizons. So it is already clear with Husserl that freedom and the world-openness of humans belong inseparably together.

But consciousness can never transform the potentially infinite transcending of all horizons into an actual infinity in which the world is given in one stroke; for in the concrete succession of experience, consciousness is always tied to factically given, single horizons. Through this finitude, it becomes noticeable to consciousness that things are more than what appears in the respective, current horizon; their being extends beyond the experiential possibilities for consciousness limited to these horizons. So it is apparent for Husserl how the being-in-itself of things constitutes itself in intentional consciousness. The basis for this explanation forms the freedom of the "I can;" for the infinity of its horizonal, experiential possibilities – of its "potentiabilities" – is the standard against which factical perception is measured. Its finitude, the pregivenness of the horizons, is a limitation on the infinity of subjectivity and will therefore only be understood in terms of this infinity. In this sense, Husserl's interpretation of the being-in-itself of things remains subjectivistic. But despite this, there is still in this analysis the possibility of breaking the sway of subjectivism.

Because Husserl interprets the freedom of the "I can" from the outset as movement within potential infinity, he overlooks the way the movement involved in the appearing of things already begins within the respective horizons, still before the transcendence to other horizons occurs. Of course, we do not experience this movement in a form of mere perception of things; they rather encounter us as "equipment" within a horizon of use, that is, as something "at hand" in the world as the "context of relevance." The trouble-free use of equipment is a movement already found within such a horizon. The real reason that Husserl's perception-based model remains insufficient is that it cannot explain how an experience of freedom regarding the appearing of things is possible exactly in the tie to a pregiven, finite horizon.

In taking his departure from the being-at-hand of things, Heidegger at first brings the transcendental-critical interpretation of this being to its limit. In the trouble-free use of equipment, the being of things consists wholly in its relatedness to humans. The independence of things, the moment of its being-in-itself, tirelessly vanishes in favor of its being-for-us. Heidegger's first pathbreaking discovery in *Being and Time*, which he later deepened in the essay concerning the origin of the artwork, was that this way of appearing entails the strongest experience of being-in-itself. We could not namely have

an experience of a trouble-free use of equipment if we were not already sure, thanks to our customs, of their availability as something usable before we engage them from time to time. This trust offers the best explanation for our self-evident conviction in the natural attitude that the being of things is already there before we make these things into objects.

But there is a further discovery in this explanation of the natural conviction of the being-in-itself of things. Equipment does not itself form the authentic basis for the trust in the thing's being at-hand. It is rather the world as the context of relevance that keeps these things ready for use with such reliability that we can freely, trustfully move about in dealing with equipment. The in-itself is accordingly the world entrusted to us at first in its dailyness as the context of relevance. The call of the maxim "to the things themselves" aims at the in-itself we experience in the appearing of things. If the world is this in-itself, then the plural of the "things themselves" proves to be a singular: the one "thing itself" of phenomenology is the world.[6]

Decisive here is the connection of the world with freedom. Our factical tie to the respective horizons of the world of relevance, that is, the finitude of the world experienced as in-itself does not restrict our freedom in dealing with equipment, but rather first makes it possible. This is because it secures unhindered movement when taking equipment into service. Husserl believed that there was freedom only in the endless expanse of transcending all single horizons which the world as universal horizon possesses. Heidegger discovered that the entire expanse of the world already announces itself, before this transcending, in the inner expanse of the respective, relevant horizon. Because this inner expanse makes room for the movement of trouble-free dealings with equipment, the world is, in its finitude, a dimension of openness. Husserl still conceives the finitude of factically pregiven horizons – in harmony with the great metaphysical tradition – in terms of the restriction of infinity. With Heidegger, the character of restriction, which involves finitude, receives a completely new meaning.

Included in the pioneering thought of Heidegger's analysis of equipment is the observation that the relations of reference, by which the context of relevance has the character of a horizon, only emerge as such when the use of equipment is disturbed. The context of relevance freely gives over things at hand in their undisturbed serviceability in that it remains hidden and withdrawn from our attention in favor of this serviceability. "World," the dimension of openness, holds open the clearance for movement with what is at hand by remaining completely inconspicuous. The in-itself – *das Ansich* – of the world thereby receives a double meaning in German: it is not only the counterconcept of "for me" or "for us," but also has the meaning of "keeping-to-itself" *(Ansichhalten)*. The world as each respective relevance-horizon "keeps" its own appearing "to itself" so that equipment can appear in

its serviceability. The restriction of freedom through finitude consists in the place-making dimension of openness reliably withdrawing from appearing.

There is a helpful model from our everyday experience that illustrates how the world makes freedom possible through restriction, namely through its keeping-to-itself. As authentically in-itself, the dimension of openness or the world has the character of pregivenness. The pre-given is – as this word implies – a gift. When it is a matter of a gift from one to another, this gift binds the receiver to the giver. In his or her dealings with the gift, the receiver is less bound to the giver, i.e. less restricted in his or her freedom, the more the giver holds back and does not draw attention to him- or herself. When the act of giving remains inconspicuous, the giver does not appear; consequently, the traditional giving of a gift in Japan or Turkey is so strongly ignored, that its receipt appears to visitors from the West unacquainted with this custom as downright impolite and unappreciative.

The world as the dimension of openness is no thing that someone can give to another as a gift. Consequently, there is no giver retreating behind the offering. What here withdraws from appearance is the happening of the giving itself, the release of the clearance for freedom through keeping-to-itself. Only through the inconspicuousness of this happening can freedom for humans emerge. Heidegger has this inconspicuousness in mind when he speaks in his late period of the "phenomenology of the inconspicuous."[7] Because the aforementioned happening is a place-making, the world can appear to us as a space. This space, however, is not a static container objectively present but rather is only there in that it opens itself by keeping-to-itself. The world "worlds," as Heidegger formulates it; it spaces itself as the dimension of openness by concealing itself.

The notion that the space of the world occurs as a happening of worlding flared up only once in the philosophical tradition, in the concept of the χώρα in Plato's *Timaeus*. The noun χώρα is connected to the verb χώρεω which characterizes a space-making through yielding. The χώρα is the space of the world that makes a place for the appearing of things by disappearing, that is, by shrinking back into concealment and withdrawing itself, as Plato says, from human conception. Even today, many towns in Greece still have the name χώρα. They are called this because here humans have arranged a place in the world. The openness of the world emerges here as such in appearance in that, through human action, it loosens up the uninhabitable density of primordial nature to such an extent that this nature admits a clearance for such human conduct. Such a loosening-up is called *Lichtung* in old German, clearing. It is from this that Heidegger can characterize the happening of worlding as clearing. That he could have also given this worlding the name χώρα nonetheless eluded him.

Heidegger took the first step toward realizing the being-in-itself of the

world with the discovery that the movement in our dealings with equipment is based in the world as a context of relevance keeping to itself. But with this discovery, the question was still not addressed as to how the being-in-itself of things – the plurality originally meant by the maxim "to the things themselves" – could be understood from the being-in-itself of the world. If things are serviceable to us as equipment, they do not even retain the kind of being-in-itself as was the case in Husserl's constitution analysis. This is because for Heidegger, the movement of the "I can," which for Husserl first commences with the transcending of finite horizons, already begins within the horizons of the context of relevance; and this is due to the fact that this horizonally internal movement is based in the trouble-free serviceability of things, a serviceability which, in appointing them to be at our disposal, exhausts their being.

The movement within the clearance of horizons was already the reason why Husserl stunted being-in-itself subjectively and did not see it in its authentic form as residing-in-itself. It is characteristic of all phenomenological analyses that do not reach the authentic being-in-itself of things, their residing-in-itself, to revert back to our subjective mobility. This leads to the conclusion that the authentic being-in-itself of things escapes us so long as, on the part of humans, their appearing remains tied to a movement within the clearance of horizons. It can only show itself when we, in a state of stillness, collectively linger before a thing and thereby encounter its inner stillness – a condition already indicated in the phrase "residing-in-itself". Such a state is only achieved through a corresponding mood; to enter into this theme, however, would lead us too far afield.[8]

In "The Origin of the Work of Art" Heidegger showed for the first time how humans can linger before a thing. But the overpowering experience given through great art is, as will be shown, not the only possibility of lingering. "The Origin of the Work of Art" also entails a decisively new insight for the non-subjectivistic understanding of being-in-itself, namely the insight that the inner stillness of things receive their sense not from our subjective mobility but from the movement of worlding, from the happening of clearing. The model for this has its origin in Heraclitus: in the bow and lyre, the war- and peace-tools of the god Apollo. Both instruments are what they are through a taut stillness. This taut stillness arises from two movements working against each other: the splaying of both arms and the movement consisting in the two arms being pulled together through the string or strings. The more the arms are splayed, the stronger is the power of this pull, and vice versa. The movements are thus more drawn to one another, the stronger they are directed against one another. This belonging-together through strife is what Heraclitus characterized as the counter-stretching jointure: παλίντονος ἁρμονίη.[9]

It is also in the happening of clearing or of worlding that two movements are executed in one strife-ridden movement: keeping-to-itself as self-concealing and self-opening as a letting things appear. As the dimension of openness for appearing, the world as we experience it in its dailyness entails two all-encompassing regions between which each appearing takes place: heaven and earth. In the pre-phenomenological realism of the natural attitude, we consider these two regions to be two static, opposing spaces encompassed by the world as the most extended space. But phenomenologically, the world is not the static, objectively present, greatest container, but rather the counter-stretching happening of worlding or clearing. As this happening, the world is the "region of all regions."[10] The world regions heaven and earth are the two ways in which the world as happening is a region, namely the way in which it is the strife between self-opening and self-closing.

Through this strife, heaven and earth as happenings belong counter-stretchingly together. This way of belonging together, however, shows itself only in materially perceptible things, and indeed then, when we collectively linger before them, because as such their material qualities surface for us in a new way. Due to the physicality of material qualities, we can say that things are made "of earth." "Earth" is as such the name for the materiality of all material, that out of which things exist. The common stroke that allows all matter to be characterized as earth results from the fact that, in our daily experience, this matter appears to us as something we can "penetrate" in various ways. This penetrating always has the sense of bringing light into the inner darkness of material. But this light does not change the inherent darkness of the material. This darkness is phenomenologically the earth as the happening of self-closing.

When we linger collectively before a thing, we experience the way the thing belongs to the world by letting its material qualities affect us in a new way. The earth shows itself in these qualities as what is self-closed and dark. This fascinates us because the happening of self-closing that thereby withdraws from appearing emerges into the open *as* this self-withdrawing; it is drawn into the happening of self-opening. The earth comes to light in the open expanse of heaven as such when the inherently dark material qualities receive, so to speak, luminosity in this expanse.[11] But this happening can only be experienced by us because the qualities bringing this thing to light in such a way are material, that is, because they belong in the earth.[12] In this relation it turns out that earth and heaven reciprocally need each other, and indeed, as happenings in conflict with one another.

The being of things is a residing-in-itself because, delivered in the appearance of its materiality, is the play of heaven and earth as a counter-stretching jointure. It is with this insight, thanks to Heidegger, that phenomenology gains access to a post-subjectivistic understanding of being-

in-itself. There was already a presentiment of the open expanse of heaven in Husserl's analysis of perception and in the analysis of equipment in *Being and Time;* in their being perceived and in their use as χρήματα, the appearing of things is embedded in horizons within which we can move by following the referential threads of the world of perception or of the context of relevance. But this expanse of the world as horizon, that is, as clearance for our subjective mobility, is but one side accessible to representation; it is the side turned to the subject. Behind that, the side turned away from the subject conceals itself. This is the keeping-to-itself of the clearing or the worlding that Heidegger in the conversation on a country path concerning *Gelassenheit* explicitly characterized as the other side of the horizon.[13]

What still, however, needs to be considered is the fact that things, the perceptible matter whose authentic being-in-itself becomes intelligible through the asubjectivistic phenomenology of world regions, appear to us in our daily experience at first as something at hand, as equipment, as χρήματα. We had already seen that "things" also encounter us as concerns in shared discussion taken into consideration as possibilities for action, for πράττειν. Because with πράγματα it is not a matter of something perceptible in its material qualities, the strife between self-concealing and revealing cannot emerge here as the counter-stretching happening of heaven and earth. But despite this, there is an analogous phenomenon.

Everyday dealings with concerns is characterized by our subjective mobility: humans in their averageness – in Heidegger's language, *"das Man"* – do not linger with the thing but rather let themselves be referred restlessly from one concern to the next. But we can also pause. This happens when consultation regarding a concern is not merely routine but rather when everything is at stake, that is, when at stake is the world as the entirety of concerns binding a community of humans. Heidegger never broke loose from his verdict concerning *"das Man"* and thus never considered that there might be a lingering with the πράγματα by which we can experience a residing-in-itself. This appears to me to be the real reason why his thinking could never do justice to the political world.

With the consultation regarding fateful concerns for a community, the consideration of possibilities for action sharpens the question as to whether the currently discussed situation provides a good opportunity to inaugurate something new and pathbreaking. This is, expressed in Greek, the question concerning the *kairos*. A *kairos* is something new that, still remaining concealed in the future, nonetheless already projects into the present by looming as a possibility in common action. When a community of humans actually seizes such a possibility, the world of their common concerns likewise gains a new shape; the self-opening of the world thrusts itself anew. In this happening, the *kairos* corresponds to heaven.

Due to the fact that the future *as* future is unretractably unknown, one can never be sure whether the present situation is a *kairos*. Consequently, the common consideration of the possibility of a *kairos* invariably turns into a controversy among opinions. The inevitability of this controversy necessitates a normative ground by which all involved parties can make themselves understood, despite this controversy. Such a ground can only exist within the binding standards for common action. But when standards are objectively represented as imperatives, commands, laws, duties, values, etc., they cannot ensure that all involved parties will agree, for such things are in principle subject to dispute and controversy. Standards must preobjectively possess a binding force in the form of lived codes of conduct. These are the customs – conduct that has become habitual – praised from time immemorial and considered worthy of emulation.

Customs form the ethos in the original sense of the word, that is, the commonly inhabited place, where a community of humans continually reside through action with the shape of their living together. Customs are self-evident to us because they gradually seep in through habit; they come from the past. But they are also self-evident to us because they are as such not an object of our attention. Consequently, the past from which they arose eludes every memory by which this past as datable could become an object of an explicit mental presentation. The ethos is for such a memory unobtainable and therefore it is the past as such; it is the "old" in the authentic sense of this word. What is old remains irretrievably distant from us as the dark past, and yet it is current and near to us in customs as lived legacy. So the self-evidence of living together in an ethos is – expressed in the language of *Being and Time* – the original experience of the past as "having-been."

Seizing a *kairos*, the renewal of the happening of world-opening, has its support in an ethos that in its inconspicuous self-evidence has the character of concealedness due to the darkness of its heritage. In the realm of the πράγματα, this is the correlate to the way in which perceptible things belong in the dark earth through the material qualities with which they appear in the expanse of heaven. Like the having-been of the ethos, the distant as distant and as near encounters us in the *kairos* likewise as one. In the *kairos*, the future appears as such, namely as the new that, through its being unknown, is always to-come and in this way remains unattainably distant, thereby giving rise to controversy. On the other hand, that which is coming to us is already quite near as an attainable possibility. The *kairos* is, then, the original experience of futurality as "arriving".

Both heaven and *kairos*, on the one hand, and earth and ethos on the other, correspond to one another, but they are not respectively the same. This is indicated in "The Origin of the Work of Art" for in contrast to the later polarization of heaven and earth in the "fourfold" of the divinities and

mortals, heaven and earth, Heidegger here sets the "world" in relation to the earth. On the one hand, the world, which in this text is the open region in which everything appearing rises, bears traits of the heaven in the sense of the Greek οὐρανός that, according to Plato and Aristotle, is the predominant term for the entirety of the world as cosmos. On the other hand, it bears traits of the historical world which is "historical" because the *kairos* keeps its happening in movement. In accordance with this double character, on the one hand, the earth is understood "cosmologically" as the dark and sheltering as later found in the fourfold, while on the other hand, it appears as the historical home for the common dwelling of humans, that is, as the ethos. But with Heidegger himself, this differentiation is omitted because he did not see that there is a world of πράγματα with which we linger by controversially discussing them. Thus in his development after the "Work of Art" piece, Heidegger can replace the counterplay of world and earth with that of heaven and earth in the fourfold without accounting for how the polarity between heaven and earth in the fourfold relates to that of world and earth in the "Work of Art" piece. What becomes lost in this development of Heidegger's thinking is the possibility of distinguishing what is peculiar to the historical world of πράγματα as it is experienced in the counterplay of ethos and *kairos* from the world "cosmologically" experienced as the counterplay of heaven and earth.

Because they determine each other through strife, ethos and *kairos* are in a similar relationship as heaven and earth. Through the nearness of the future approaching in the *kairos*, the ethos shifts into the distance of the past, for an imminent alteration of the conditions of life lets what is traditional appear as overtaken.[14] But simultaneously, the nearness of the future absorbs the attention of controversy and thereby protects the ethos from objectification in this controversy; in this way, it can be near by virtue of its preobjective self-evidence as the place of residence. On the other hand, through this nearness of the ethos, the future that announces itself in a possible *kairos* is held at bay because the inertia of old ways refuses the becoming-present of the new.[15] But this same nearness of the ethos conversely renders this becoming-present possible because it forms in controversy the basis for mutual understanding that leads to seizing the *kairos*.

So in the experience of the reciprocal relation between ethos and *kairos*, we become aware of time in a primordiality no longer subjectively conceived, as Heidegger described it in his late essay "Time and Being:" authentic future and past condition each other reciprocally through the mutual strife between nearness and distance. This strife happens when what was "withholds" arrival from "what is arriving" and the future conversely "denies" *(verweigert)*[16] what was its availability in an objectified memory. We only notice this counter-stretching jointure, however, when we through

controversy linger with a fateful concern and in this way experience a πρᾶγμα as a thing residing-in-itself.

The dimension of openness that surfaces for us in this manner is the political world founded historically by the Greeks as they shaped the polis into a democracy, that is, into a life-space that opens itself up only through controversy among opinions.[17] In contrast, the dimension of openness, of which we become aware when a χρῆμα appears to us as a place of counter-stretching jointure, is the material world of "nature" inhabited by us, the natural lifeworld. It opens itself up in the counterplay of the world regions heaven and earth, and this occurs at any time in any place where humans inhabit a χώρα. This counterplay, of course, only occurs *in concreto* in a determinate, cultural form; that is, what "heaven" and "earth" mean for humans in relation to life-conditions fundamentally determined by a climate, is not the same in every region on this planet. But despite this, the world of political concerns, in comparison to the natural life-world counterplay of heaven and earth, is in a much more drastic way subject to historical transformation, because time rules here; time lets a determinate ethos become custom while also rendering the *kairos* possible as a surprise capable of altering the entire way in which a community lives together.

One also has an experience of time in the "cosmologically" understood counterplay of heaven and earth, namely in the fluctuation of one's situatedness fundamentally conditioned by the "climate." That is, by the fact that one is a bodily being, one is exposed to periodical, elemental reversals from heat to cold, moisture to dryness, light to darkness in the alternation of day and night, as well as in the change of year and of the seasons.[18] Only when the relation between this experience of time and an experience of time grounding shared life in a political world is clarified, can it emerge to what extent the world of πράγματα and the natural life-world of the χρήματα are shapes of one and the same world. And it is first with this that the question concerning the relation between the interculturally invariable structures of the natural lifeworld and the historically changing political world can be addressed. Because this question still needs to be posed in an age when all cultures are growing together worldwide, the phenomenology of the world still has its future before it.

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References

1. I would like to express my thanks to Amy Morgenstern for translating this article.
2. A formulation out of Heidegger's "Brief über den 'Humanismus'," cited from the last edition of Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, Gesamtausgabe Vol. 9, (Frankfurt a.M., 1976), p.349. The English translation ("Letter on Humanism") is found in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (Harper & Row, 1977), p.228.

3. In this sense, Heidegger says in ibid: "....that what something is in its being does not exhaust itself in objectivity," p.228.
4. Heidegger also says in *Sein und Zeit*, (Tübingen, 1957, p.212): "Nur solange Dasein ist, gibt es Sein. Wenn Dasein nicht existiert, dann 'ist' auch nicht 'Unabhängigkeit' und 'ist' auch nicht 'Ansich'." The translation is as follows: "only as long as Da-sein *is*... 'is there' being. If Da-sein does not exist, then there 'is' not 'independence' either, nor 'is' there an 'in itself'," Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (SUNY, 1996), p.196. This sentence, to which Heidegger comes back in programmatic explication of the "Letter," makes clear that for him it is never a matter of going back to a precritical realism, as some interpretations even today seem to assume.
5. This, due to its phenomenological method, remains Heidegger's basic work, even when he later wrote a "second principle work."
6. And not Being, as Heidegger thought; cf. Klaus Held, "Heidegger and the Principle of Phenomenology," in *Martin Heidegger: Critical Assessments*, ed. Chr. Macann, (London, 1992).
7. Martin Heidegger, *Seminare*, Gesamtausgabe Vol. 15, (Frankfurt a. M., 1986), p.399.
8. It necessitates a "basic mood," as Heidegger formulates it. For the question concerning through what and in which form such moods are possible, cf. Klaus Held, "Fundamental Moods and Heidegger's Critique of Contemporary Culture," in *Reading Heidegger. Commemorations*, ed. J. Sallis, (Bloomington/Indianapolis 1993). In addition, cf. the analysis of basic moods in Peter Trawny, *Heideggers Phänomenologie des Ereignisses*, forthcoming from Alber-Verlag, Freiburg.
9. Diels/Kranz, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, B 51; cf. also Klaus Held, *Heraklit, Parmenides und der Anfang von Philosophie und Wissenschaft. Eine phänomenologische Besinnung*, (Berlin, 1980), p.166 ff.
10. Eugen Fink, *Sein, Wahrheit, Welt - Vor-Fragen zum Problem des Phänomen-Begriffs*, (The Hague, 1958), p.151.
11. Heidegger characterizes this in "The Origin of the Work of Art" as "setting up a world;" cf. "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes" in *Holzwege*, Gesamtausgabe Vol. 5, (Frankfurt a.M., 1977), p.29ff. For the English translation cf. Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art" in *Poetry, Language, and Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter, (Harper & Row, 1971), p.44 ff.
12. This Heidegger calls in loc. cit. p.31 ff. (Hofstadter, p.45 ff.) "setting forth of the earth."
13. Martin Heidegger, "Ἀγχιβαθίη..." in *Feldweg-Gespräche*, Gesamtausgabe Vol. 77, (Frankfurt a. M., 1995), p.112 ff. The turning of thought by which it turns to the above mentioned "other side" is the "turn" *(Kehre)*. Through the turn, the "against" of things achieves a significance that extends beyond the "against" *(gegen)* of "ob-jectivity" *(Gegenständlichkeit)*. In order to bring this overflow of the "against" to language, Heidegger in the *Feldweggespräch* reaches back to an old dialect form of the word *"Gegend"* (region), which relates to the German preposition *"gegen,"* and characterizes the world as "countering" *(gegnet)* to the extent that it is understood as the region of regions turned away from the subject, that is, as worlding *(Welten)*. In the original text of *Feldweggespräch*, Heidegger occasionally still uses the word "worlding" for the "countering" *(das "Gegnen")* of what counters *("gegnet")*; cf. p.149. In the selection published while Heidegger was still alive under the title, "Zur Erörterung der Gelassenheit" (in *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens*, Gesamtausgabe Vol. 13, Frankfurt a.M., 1983), Heidegger no longer uses the word "worlding;" cf. p.69 f.
14. This original experience forms phenomenologically the basis for what Heidegger in "Zeit und Sein" says of the future no longer interpreted subjectivistically: "...it keeps what has been open by denying its advent as present," in *Zur Sache des Denkens*, (Tübingen, 1969), p.16; trans. Joan Stambaugh in "Time and Being" in *On Time and Being*, (Harper & Row, 1972), p.15.
15. This is the original experience on the basis of which Heidegger in the same essay (p.16, trans. p.15) can say of the nearing of nearness, that it "keeps open the approach coming from the future by withholding the present of the approach."
16. The nearing mentioned in nt. 14 "keeps safe" *(verwahrt)*, as Heidegger in connection to the above-cited sentence continues, "what denies in the having-been, what remains withheld in the future."
17. Related to this, cf. Klaus Held, "Authentic Existence and the Political World" in *Research in Phenomenology*, Volume XXVI, 1996.
18. On the concept, referring back to Herder, of the climate decisive for cultural differences and on the understanding of the "elements," cf. Klaus Held, "Sky and Earth as Invariants of the Natural Lifeworld," in *Phänomenologische Forschungen*, eds. E.W. Orth and Chai-Fai Cheung, Sonderband 1998: "Phenomenology of Interculturality and Life-World".

Poets and Rivers: Heidegger on Hölderlin's "Der Ister"*

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Between 1934 and 1942 Heidegger delivered three series of lectures on Hölderlin's poetry.[1] The discussion of "Der Ister" was the last of these, although Heidegger continued to think and write about Hölderlin into the 1960s (see GA 4). William McNeill and Julia Davis's recent translation of the "Ister"—volume (GA 53)—is the first of the Hölderlin lectures to appear in English.

The appearance of the volume in this excellent translation[2] is an event of considerable importance in the Anglophone reception of Heidegger. For in spite of being, as is often the way with lectures, occasionally ill organized, obscure, and even confused, the work casts a great deal of light both backward on the nexus composed of "community," "heritage," "destiny," and "repetition" left in a sketchy condition in *Being and Time* (1927) and forward. As Suzanne Ziegler points out,[3] the postwar Heidegger's thoughts on homeland (*Heimat*) and dwelling (*wohnen*)—for him the decisive topics—all have their roots in the Hölderlin lectures. Otto Pöggeler makes a related point[4] about the lectures. From his meditations on Hölderlin, Heidegger derived a "new language," the language in which all his later thinking is couched. The implication of this is that only by

* Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister,"* translated by William McNeill and Julia Davis, Studies in Continental Thought (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), xi + 185 pp., $35. I would like to thank Jeff Malpas for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this critical notice.

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learning the vocabulary of this language in the place where it was forged can one hope to be able to read the later Heidegger.[5]

The text is significant in another respect, as well, in that it provides an important testament as to the political stance Heidegger had arrived at by 1942. What this stance is, I shall discuss in sections 7-11 below.

The work falls into three sections, the outer two concerned directly with Hölderlin's "hymn," and the middle with Sophocles's *Antigone* which, Heidegger holds, is essential background to any comprehension of Hölderlin. (In fact only the first two were delivered, as Heidegger ran out of time and added the third section later.)

1.

Why Hölderlin? The lectures begin with a reading of Hölderlin's four-strophe poem in its entirety. The remainder of the text is an interpretation of the poem. Since Heidegger evidently affirms as true that which presents itself as Hölderlin interpretation, it seems clear that Hölderlin constitutes, for Heidegger, a kind of *path*. The (for him) productive way to philosophical truth is meditation on Hölderlin's poem.

The strategic background, as Heidegger sees it, is as follows. The history of thought has been, since Plato, "metaphysics." (The precise meaning of this, in Heidegger's mouth, pejorative term need not concern us here.) But metaphysics is a false turning, a turning away from the greatness of the "commencement" (*Anfang*) of the West that happened in pre-Socratic Greece. Hölderlin, however, stands outside metaphysics. (Thus, in spite of his close friendship with Hegel and frequent talk of *Geist*, his *Geist* is crucially different from Hegel's.) Hölderlin is, thus, the vital link to the pre-Socratic, and the promise of a "new commencement."

Still, why Hölderlin? What did Heidegger take himself to be up to? Did he, as many have suggested, find Hölderlin's lines to be useful clotheslines on which to peg what he knew, more or less consciously, to be his own washing? Or did he, rather, take himself to be merely an expositor, articulating in painstaking prose the insights of genius already and eternally "there" in the poetry?

The lectures themselves contain several extended discussions of the nature and limits of interpretation (*Auslegung*) which are, quite self-consciously, self-reflexive.

Interpretation and translation are, says Heidegger, the same. All interpretation is translation, and all translation interpretation (p. 62). One view of translation—W. V. Quine calls it the "myth of the museum"—is that there are Platonic "meanings" named in one language by one word, in another by a different word. Translation is, thus, the substitution of co-designators, of synonyms. But this, Heidegger agrees with Quine, is a myth. Translation—certainly the translation of poetry—cannot be the

substitution of synonyms. This is precluded by the fact that different languages have a different *Geist*, different "spirits."

The reason Hölderlin's (and so his own) *Geist* is unlike the *Geist* of German metaphysics is, Heidegger explains, that, whereas *Geist* for Hegel is "the absolute," "the unconditioned that conditions and determines every being in its being" (p. 127), Hölderlin's notion, though related, is an "overcoming" of this substantival conception. In Hölderlin's thought, spirit is not a thing, but, rather, "that which is fittingly destined" to a mode of human being: "That which is fittingly destined is what spirit thinks" (pp. 127-28). Elsewhere, in his own distinctive vocabulary, Heidegger calls this a "disclosure," "clearing," or "open" of Being (see section 2 below). Thus, rather than being a substance, Hölderlin's *Geist* (think here of the *Geist* in "*Zeitgeist*") is a way of understanding and experiencing the world as a totality.[6]

Given this, and given the divergence between the *Geist* of different languages, it follows that translation cannot consist in the substitution of "equivalent" expressions. (The same is true within a single language. The historical mutability of the *Geist* of, say, German, means that a complex classic such as Kant's *Critique* or Hegel's *Phenomenology* constantly needs re-interpretation, re-translation, in order to render it accessible to a modern audience [p. 62].) To put the thought crudely, there can be no dictionary-governed translation of a poem about snow into a language in which there is no word for snow. Less crudely, the translation of a poem about *Heimat*, *Himmel*, and *Erde* into a language that only has "home," "sky," and "earth" (part of the difficulty of McNeill and Davis's task), or, for that matter, a poem about "brook," "fell," and "dale" into a language whose active vocabulary contains only "stream," "hill," and "valley," can never be mechanical and exact, but must always be creative, circumspect, and approximate.

Heidegger concludes from these reflections that "translation is not so much *trans*-lating" (i.e., using one's own language as a way of crossing over into the mind of the foreign speaker) as "an awakening, clarification, and unfolding of one's own language with the help of an encounter with the foreign language" (pp. 65-66). Ultimately, it is an encounter with a foreign language for the sake of "appropriating (*aneignen*) one's own" (ibid.).

Does this mean that the foreign, the poem of a different language or from the historical past of one's own, is simply an *occasion* for doing one's own thing, as, for instance, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is, in fact, in spite of Baz Luhrmann's pretensions, a mere occasion for his execrable, language-killing tale of vendetta and love amidst the urban debris of a gun-crazed, fictionalized Los Angeles? Heidegger's practice with respect both to Hölderlin and to Sophocles suggests something far from this view. He makes, for example, scholarly use of Hölderlin's letters and theoretical writings, and of cross-references to other poems, in his attempt to illumi-

nate "Der Ister." He worries about "imposing" meaning on Hölderlin (p. 2), and is concerned to show that the apparent "violence" of his translation of Sophocles's *deinon* into the German *unheimlich* (strange, uncanny) is *merely* apparent (p. 69; see, further, section 9 below). And, as we will see, he criticizes the usual translation of the Greek *polis* into "state" or "city state" as thoroughly unGreek, a mistranslation (pp. 81-82).

Heidegger's view of his own interpretative, translational activity thus seems to be sensibly intermediate between the museum myth and the stimulus-for-doing-your-own-thing position. A possibly helpful analogy here is that of musical performance (or, as we, indeed, say, "interpretation"). In this domain, the analogue of Heidegger's position is the view that there is no such thing as a fully "authentic" performance of a musical work from the past. Even if we perform Bach's music with Bach bows, even if we use eighteenth-century instruments or exact replicas, the difference in the audience's and the performers' understanding of the event—the difference, as Heidegger would say, between the *Geist* of eighteenth-century Leipzig and that of, say, twenty-first-century New York—makes exact replication of the eighteenth-century event impossible. But that, of course, does not mean that anything goes. Though they may be hard to articulate, there are limits outside of which one does "violence" to, deforms rather than performs, the work, sometimes so much so that the performance ceases to count as a performance of what it claims to perform. Though there are indefinitely many "valid" interpretations of a Brandenburg Concerto, that does not mean that every interpretation is as good as every other.

Heidegger does not, then, aim to capture "the meaning" of Hölderlin's "Der Ister." In the seminal "The Origin of the Work of Art,"[7] he speaks of the artwork as essentially tied to "preservers," the audience. Like Nietzsche, he thinks of the receiving (as opposed to the spectating) of art as a matter of recreating the artwork within one's own vocabulary and experience. And he exemplifies this creative appropriation in his own famous description of Van Gogh's peasant shoes: "From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toilsome tread of the worker stares forth. In the stiffly rugged heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever-uniform furrows of the field" (pp. 33-34). And so on. Heidegger, of course, cannot *know* that the shoes were female shoes. (Some have suggested they were neither female nor peasant shoes, but actually Van Gogh's own city shoes.) But this is beside the point. Heidegger's interpretation of the painting is an act of "preservation"; the creation of a prose poem, his *own* artwork. Yet, so he would claim, it is an artwork sensitively related to its source, an artwork that stands to its original as a fine performance to a musical score.

This, then, is how we are intended to understand the "Ister" lectures—as an extended prose poem in which the poem is "performed" once again, performed in a different medium and within a different historical context.

A small industry has grown up devoted to arguing that Heidegger's readings of Hölderlin are violent disfigurations rather than valid, sensitive "performances." There is a certain pointlessness to the endeavour. For, almost always, the more or less explicit motive is to "save" Hölderlin. Hölderlin was a great German poet. But Heidegger, it is thought, Heidegger *qua* philosopher, was a fascist. Hölderlin, therefore, must be rescued from the clutches of Heidegger's readings in order to rescue him from the charge of fascism. I have argued,[8] however, that none of Heidegger's philosophy is, or is proximate to, fascism. Hölderlin does not, therefore, need rescuing.

2.

What, in Heidegger's reading, is the poem about? It is about the Danube, under its Græco-Roman name, the Ister. The important thing about the river, however, is that it gives rise to what is variously called a "locale" or "place" (*Ort*) of dwelling, a *Heimat* (home), "one's own" (*das Eigene*), and—in Hölderlin's, rather than Heidegger's, language—a "Fatherland" (*Vaterland*).[9] In the poem itself we find: "Here, however, we wish to build/ For rivers make arable/The land. . . ." The reason they do this is that they "run in the dry" (pp. 4-5). For reasons we will come to, the most perspicuous way of describing the river-established *Heimat* is to call it the place of "homecoming" (*Heimischwerden*).

Since, however, the river is a metaphor[10] for the poet, the poem is not just about the river's establishment of a *Heimat*, but also, and more deeply, about the poet; about his "care," or vocation, to "make arable the land." "Full or merit" (on account of their "works"), writes Hölderlin, "yet poetically (*dichterisch*) humans dwell upon this earth" (p. 137).[11]

What is this *Heimat*? It is a place of security and belonging, a place of "rest" or "repose" in the "inviolability" of one's own "essence." Such "repose," however, does not imply "lack of activity." It is, rather, its proper source, the "steadfast" centre around which action is "concentrated," action which may, Heidegger adds (foreshadowing his discussion of *Antigone*), demand the pain of sacrifice (pp. 20-21). Commenting on the lines from Hölderlin's "Voice of the People," "Unconcerned with our wisdom/the rivers still rush on and yet/who loves them not. . . ." (pp. 27-28), Heidegger writes that we "love" (nothing less than love will suffice here) the rivers because their flow "tears humans out of the habitual midst of their lives, so that they may be in a centre outside of themselves, that is, be [like, for example, Antigone] eccentric" (p. 28). For human beings to belong to their "eccentric" centre is, he says, for them "to fulfil whatever is destined to them, and whatever is fitting (*schicklich*)

as their specific way of being" (p. 21). Possessing a destiny is, in other Heideggerian language, being "historical." Historicality is the distinguishing mark of the human mode of being; humans can be *un*historical but only non-human nature can be *a*historical (p. 142).[12]

Being properly historical is both forward and backward looking, "multidirectional" (p. 151). It is a "commemorative remembering" (*Andenken*) of the past, but also an "awaiting of what is coming and futural" (p. 128). Fully to live out what is "fittingly destined" is to be fully historical (p. 128)—Heidegger's version, I would suggest, of Aristotelian "flourishing." It follows from this that, to become unhistorical, to betray the *Heimat* and the fitting, is to lapse into the unfitting, the improper (*uneigentlich*).

Anyone familiar with the closing sections of *Being and Time* will recognize the territory here, for what Heidegger is embarked on is the illumination of "heritage," "destiny," "historicality," and "resoluteness." *Heimat*, that is, embraces "heritage," and, in doing so, provides the possibility of action that is both centred, "resolute," and, as arising out of *das Eigene* (one's own), *eigentlich* (authentic). We see from this retrospective illumination how groundless is the common charge[13] that *Being and Time* is ethically empty, "nihilistic." For there, as here, there lies at the heart of Heidegger's philosophy the ground of an *ethos*. It is the *Heimat*.

Heidegger's view that the human being *qua* human is grounded in a *Heimat* amounts to a kind of essentialism. More helpfully, perhaps, it can be described as a "thick" conception of human facticity. The earlier Sartre, for all his commitment to radical freedom, was forced to recognize the human agent as constrained by, for example, biology and physiology. For Heidegger, however, it is not merely the biological that belongs to facticity. Repeating the theme of "thrownness" from *Being and Time*, he writes that, because human beings find themselves "in the midst of beings as such, they must, in accordance with their essence, seek to become homely within a particular site" (or "place"—*Stätte*) (p. 90). Because, in other words, as we become autonomous beings, we find ourselves *already* in a particular *Heimat*, already with particular commitments, it is only it that we are able to appropriate as the source of what is fitting.

All this is engaging and suggestive, yet important questions remain to be answered. Just what *is* the *Heimat*? And how does it determine the "fitting"? In the *Antigone* discussion in Part 2 of the work, Heidegger provides an analysis of the *Heimat* in terms of the concepts of *polis* and "the open."

Polis, we have observed, is, according to Heidegger, not to be translated as either "city" or "city state" (p. 81). For it is a "pre-political," not a political, concept, the ground from out of which "the political in both the originary and in the derivative sense" is determined (p. 82). (In section 9 below I shall reflect on the significance of this de-politicization of the *polis* in the context of the Germany of 1942.) Plato's famous assertion that philosophers should rule in the *polis* has been fundamentally misunderstood by thinking of the *polis* in an unGreek way (p. 85).

If not the state, what, then, is the *polis*? It is the place, the "site," of "the abode of human history that belongs to humans in the midst of beings"—that is, "the site of being homely in the midst of beings as a whole." From out of this

> site and stead (*Statt*) springs forth whatever is granted stead (*gestattet*)[14] and whatever is not, what is order and what is disorder, what is fitting and what is unfitting. For whatever is fitting (*das Schickliche*) determines destiny [*das Geschick*], and such destiny determines history (*die Geschichte*). To the *polis* there belong the gods and temples, the festivals and games, the governors and council of elders, the people's assembly and the armed forces, the ships and field marshals, the poets and thinkers. . . . [F]rom out of the relation to the gods, out of the kind of festivals and the possibility of celebrations, out of the relationship between master and slave, out of a relation to sacrifice and battle, out of a relationship to honour and glory, out of the relationship between these relationships and from out of the ground of their unity there prevails what is called the *polis*. (p. 82)

What is this unifying[15] "ground" or "essence" (ibid.) of the *polis*? It lies in "the open site . . . from out of which all human relations towards beings . . . are determined" (ibid.). It lies, in other words, in "the open," in the fact that "Being . . . has opened itself to humans and is this very open" (p. 91).

The important point to notice here is the priority of Being. The open is constituted by Being's disclosing, revealing itself as a particular experience of beings as a whole, an experience that constitutes the defining ontology or "horizon" of a particular historical epoch of a particular culture. This fundamental ontology is never the product of human initiative, but is, rather, "destined" or "sent" by Being. (In other language, the fundamental grounds of history possess a complexity and obscurity that defies human comprehension and, hence, human mastery.) In the "granting" of this ontology is granted, too, a fundamental understanding of what is "fitting" or "proper," and what is not—in other words, an *ethos*, an ethics, politics in the "originary sense." Out of this arises "destiny"—that is, in a normative sense, "history," an understanding of the historical narrative that is proper to both individual and community. Out, for example, of the disclosure that is the ontology of traditional Christianity arises the conception of the proper life as a journey through a vale of sin and tears toward a redemptive, other-wordly destination. In the Greek disclosure, on the other hand, no such destiny would be possible. For, as Heidegger remarks, the Greeks had no conception of sin (in the sense of transgression) and, for them, the earth, as a divinity, could not be a place of exile (pp. 30, 77).[16]

A major puzzle concerning the relation of Being to the *Heimat* can be stated in a crude but useful way as follows. Being, surely, is "cosmopolitan." If Sophocles, in his poetry, becomes proximate to Being, then he is, surely, proximate to—not, certainly, the same *thing*, but to, nonetheless—"the same," as is Hölderlin in his. Heidegger, indeed, says this: "The choral ode from Sophocles and the river poems of Hölderlin poeticize the same" (p. 123)—that is, Being, or "the Holy" (p. 138). Yet the *Heimat*, (together with the *ethos* it grounds) must be local, peculiar to those whose dwelling is focused by a particular river, who share a particular *Vaterland*—for example, the Germans. Heidegger is repeatedly and unequivocally clear that there is a multiplicity of different modes of being human, so that there is a multiplicity of *Heimaten*. But how, then, as Heidegger seems to affirm, can Being or "the Holy" *be* the *Heimat*?

This puzzle is also the puzzle of how Part 2 of the work relates to Part 1. For while Part 2, as we will see, speaks of Antigone's ability to sustain alienation within Creon's state as grounded in a deep at-homeness in Being, Part 1 repeatedly identifies the *Heimat* that is the object of Hölderlin's poetic "care" as the *Heimat* of, specifically, the Germans.

The resolution of this puzzle lies in reflecting upon Heidegger's remark that, although Hölderlin and Sophocles poeticize "the same," they do not poeticize the "identical": "for the same is truly the same only in that which is different. What is different here . . . is the historical humankind of the Greeks and the Germans [so that] they must become at home (*heimisch werden*) in different ways" (p. 123).

How can the "same" be different from the "identical"? I suggest it is when it is refracted through different lenses, as it were. The "lenses" here are the Greek and German languages, each of which, as we saw, has its own historically developed *Geist*, its own mode of world-experience. The result of the refraction of Being through the German *Geist* will be different from, non-"identical" with, the result of its refraction through the Greek *Geist*. (Notice that, since there are marked differences between different dialects of, for example, German, the German *Geist* will be internally complex. This complexity allows us to resolve the ambiguity as to whether the *Heimat* of Hölderlin's poetic "care" is his [and Heidegger's] native Swabia—the place where the Danube rises—or the German-speaking lands in general. The answer is both, though the former in a more immediate way than the latter.)

Let me pose another crude but clarifying question. Why is Being necessary in the analysis of *Heimat*? Why can we not understand *Heimat* as, *simply*, a given world-experience, a given facticity? Granted that the *polis* is not to be understood as state, but as, rather, a comprehensive and unified onto-ethical world-understanding, still, what is added by the thought that this world-understanding is a disclosure "of Being"?

Heidegger writes: "What is characteristic of human abode is grounded in the fact that Being . . . has opened itself to humans and is this very open. As such, it receives human beings into itself, and so determines them to be in a site" (p. 91). But, surely, every world-disclosure is "of Being." For since Being is just "what there genuinely is," "the real,"[17] every genuine disclosure, as opposed to appearance in the sense of *mere* appearance, discloses it in one of its aspects. Yet not every disclosure determines a "site" or *Heimat*. After all, the nub of Heidegger's critique of modernity, first developed in the Nietzsche-confrontation of the late 1930s and early 1940s, is that the technological disclosure of Being that defines the modern epoch precisely fails to constitute a *Heimat*. What, then, is the difference?

In the *Antigone* discussion, taking over the term from Sophocles, Heidegger speaks of the Greek "hearth" as the "middle" of the open that is the *polis* (p. 105). The hearth is the place of fire, and, throughout the discussion, fire, "the fire from the heavens," is taken to indicate the presence of "the Holy." It is the same fire, Heidegger remarks, that is present in both house and temple, the same goddess, *Vesta*, in her Roman name, who is present in both places. The same fire, then, prevails throughout the ancient *polis*, "lighting, illuminating, warming, nourishing, purifying, refining, glowing" (ibid.).

What we need is a distinction between world-disclosures that are centred on the "radiance" (p. 105) of a "hearth" and those that are not. Only the former provide the possibility of dwelling, a *Heimat*. Commenting on "full of merit, yet poetically/Humans dwell upon this earth," Heidegger says, following Hölderlin's explicit remarks, that (a) the Holy is the poetic, in the sense of that which is to be poeticized, and (b) it is the poetic, and it alone, which grants the possibility of human "dwelling" (pp. 138-39).

Heidegger's point, in a nutshell, is that homecoming can occur only if the world discloses itself as holy. Dwelling (as opposed to existing) can only occur in a sacred place,[18] a place of poets.

It is important not to misunderstand Heidegger here. Nietzsche, once he discovered positivism, turned against the idea of an art-grounded *Heimat*—against, as he called it, "art deification"—regarding it as a prosecution of Christian metaphysics by other means.[19] But, for Hölderlin and Heidegger, the Holy is not present in the *polis* because it is sent by a distant God. For them, the Holy is prior to, "beyond" any and all gods (p. 138). Although they speak of the poet as a "demigod" standing *between* gods and men, for Heidegger, at least, the poet is in many ways "above" the gods, since it is he who articulates the Holy which the gods need in order to "warm" themselves (p. 156). In later works, Heidegger speaks of the Holy as the "æther" which the gods need in order to breath, an æther which, however, can be present even if the gods are, for the time being, "absent."

The way to understand this is to understand Heidegger as saying that the Greek gods belong *within* the *polis*. The Holy is not a light shining

from a distant place, but is, rather, how the *polis* discloses itself. As Being, the Holy is, for Heidegger, as he sometimes puts it, a reservoir of unconcealment, a darkness illuminated for us only in the open we inhabit. Think, then, of the moon. One may apprehend what one sees either as a circular disk or as the lighted side of a massive darkness. Heidegger's point is that, only when the latter occurs, only when our world is experienced as a momentary illumination of an infinitely and awesomely undisclosed—by our lights, a "nothingness"—only then do we discover the ultimate protectedness of homecoming. The appropriate word here (though Heidegger rarely uses it) is "sublime." Only in a world disclosed as sublime is the protectedness which constitutes dwelling possible.

Why should this be the case? Heidegger's answer is provided via a return to his earlier preoccupation, death (pp. 75-76). Those who seek the security of dwelling in the two-dimensionality of a world that is a world of beings merely are compelled to take an evasive stance toward death—the ultimate and inevitable shattering of every attempt to discover a *Heimat* among beings alone. Only in a world in which, as it were, beings ring with the song of Being can the security of genuine *Heimat* be found. Only by "belonging to" something incomparably greater than any fragile human fragment, only by being alive to, in Kant's words, the "supersensible side of our being" can we look the finitude of that fragment squarely in the eye.

A consequence of the thesis that *Heimat* can be found only in a world disclosed as holy is that only the Holy can determine an *ethos*, ultimate ethical commitment. For if, as we have seen, right action is determined by the notion of the "fitting" or "proper" that belongs to a given world-disclosure, then the commitments constitutive of the world thus disclosed can be *my* commitments only if I understand myself to *belong* to that world. The commitments "ownly" (*eigentlich*) to a given world can be "ownly" to me only if I find my *Heimat* in that world. The commitments of a world where I am not at home must, for me, lack all ultimate authority. I shall elaborate on this point in attending to the ways in which Antigone is, and is not, at home in the *polis*, in section 9 below.[20]

3.

Why should rivers be connected to *Heimat* in a way that represents something more than a fact about human geography? Why should the river be especially linked with the poet's task of disclosing the *Heimat*? The answer has to do with the fact that the river is a kind of "journeying" (*Wanderschaft* [§6 passim]) and with the fact that Hölderlin's "law," as Heidegger calls it (p. 133), announces the connectedness of *Heimat* and journeying. In greater detail, what the "law" states is that being properly and fully at home in the *Heimat* is always a matter of home*coming*, the result of a journey through the "foreign," a return (ibid.). As Heidegger points out, this

"entails that human beings are initially, and for a long time, and sometimes forever, not at home" (p. 49).

Why should the provincial, the as-yet-untravelled spirit, fail to be fully at home in the *Heimat*? Because, in the words of Hölderlin's *Bread and Wine* "the *Heimat* consumes (*zehret*) it" (p. 126). It consumes it in a way that precludes its proper "appropriation" (*angeignen*) of the *Heimat* (p. 131).

Heidegger provides two examples, or illustrations, of the application of Hölderlin's "law" to particular cases (cf. p. 134). The first concerns the Greeks, the second the Germans.

What was "natural" to the Greeks was, in Hölderlin's language, the "fire from the heavens"—that is, as we have already seen, the "æther" of holiness which first creates the possibility of "the arrival and proximity of the gods" (p. 135). (Heidegger places "natural" in quotation marks in order to counter any appearance of the "biologism" of racist writers like Rosenberg and Kolbenheyer which he had consistently criticized throughout the 1930s.[21] What he means, here, is simply that, at the time it began to make sense to speak of "the Greeks," their culture, and, above all, their language were intensely exposed to the sublime.) What the Greeks lacked, however, was, again in Hölderlin's words, "clarity of presentation" (*Klarheit der Darstellung*).

In the Hölderlin lectures of 1934-35, where he discusses this same topic, Heidegger suggests that Hölderlin's duality between heavenly fire and clarity of presentation is what was later rediscovered by Nietzsche as the dichotomy between the "Dionysian" and the "Apollonian" (GA 39, p. 294). Since, however, Nietzsche frequently seems to identify the Dionysian with what Plato called "the unlimited," and the Apollonian with conceptual ordering, this is potentially misleading. For what it suggests is that, initially, the Greeks existed in a purely "fiery" state before bringing non-conceptual (as Plato sometimes also called it) "chaos" under conceptual form. But this is impossible, for, rather evidently, there can be no human action, and hence no humanity, in the absence of a conceptually structured reality.

What the early Greeks lacked, Heidegger means to say, was not Apollonian, conceptual ordering, as such, but, rather, clarity and system in that ordering. What they lacked—as he, indeed, makes explicit—was the capacity for "the formation of projects, enclosures, and frameworks . . . compartments, [for] making divisions and structuring" (p. 136). Part of this lack was a lack of science. They had no mathematics, physics, history, psychology, or rhetoric.[22] But they also lacked system in the normative disciplines—in politics, jurisprudence, ethics, and, most crucially, in theology. As a consequence, they were unable to "delimit unequivocally or clearly attend to" what it was that, for them, was the "fitting"; their grasp of the *Heimat* was "still veiled and equivocal" (p. 130).

The consequence of this was an "inability to take hold of themselves (*sich fassen*) in the face of the excess of destiny and its destinings . . . an excess of fate" (p. 135). Overcome, that is, by the "power of the fire" (ibid.), overcome by their own futile puniness in the face of the majesty of the sublime, they (like children, one might suggest) accommodated their actions to the promptings of the spirit of the moment, and were thus unable to construct their lives with the clear and disciplined wholeness constitutive of "resoluteness" or "character." They were, as Heidegger puts it, unable to transform what was "natural" to them into a "nature" (p. 136). In still other language, what they lacked was freedom; it is to be noted that Heidegger's entire discussion at this point is presented as an exposition of Hölderlin's remark that "We learn nothing with greater difficulty than the free use of the national (*das Nationelle*)" (p. 135). As a heroin addict is "consumed"—that is, denied freedom—by his habit, so the untutored, as-yet-untravelled spirit of the Greeks was "consumed" by their *Heimat*.

It was their "greatness," however, that they did, both physically and spiritually speaking, travel. Through openness to the "foreign"—to what Heidegger sometimes calls "the Asian," but, in particular, perhaps, to the art and science of Babylon and Egypt—they acquired, and even excelled their mentors (p. 124) in, clarity of presentation. They were, thus, able to "bring the fire to the still radiance of pure lucidity," and so, for the first time, "appropriate," become properly at home in, the *Heimat* (p. 125).[23]

4.

I turn now to Heidegger's second illustration of the operation of Hölderlin's law, to his discussion of, in the language of the 1934-35 lectures, the relationship between the "endowment" (*Mitgegebene*) and the "task" (*Aufgegebene*) (GA 39, p. 290) as it applies to the Germans. Here, repeating the theme from that earlier discussion that the task of the Germans is to fight the battle of the Greeks but "on the opposite front" (GA 39, p. 293), his account of the relationship is precisely the opposite of what he said in the case of the Greeks. That with which the Germans of today find themselves endowed is clarity of presentation. What they lack is holy "fire." The fire that was present in the "commencement" of Western (and, hence, of German) culture has become dimmed down, the might of Being "forgotten." What is left is an excess of ordering. The Germans have "become carried away by the provision of frames and compartments, making divisions and structuring" (p. 136). (Since the mid-1930s, it is pertinent to note, Heidegger had identified the inhumaneness of "ceaseless organization"[24] as the essence of Nazism.) "Consumed" by the "fire"-less (though not, presumably, "ember"-less) *Heimat*, having lost the sense of the sacredness of things and of humanity's correlative role as the custodian rather than master of beings, they are caught up in the frenzied pursuit of "grasping" and "delimiting" "for its own sake" (p. 136). In the language of the extended Nietzsche-study that had occupied the second half of the previous decade, they are caught in the grip of the insatiable and unlimited "will to power." They have become destroyers of nature and murderers of men.

To properly appropriate—to become free in, rather than consumed by—the *Heimat*, the Germans need to revive their atrophied sense of the "fire," to "grasp the ungraspable and themselves in the face of the ungraspable" (p. 136). They need, therefore, to "travel" into the foreign, or, at least, into that which must "be encountered by them as that which is foreign" (ibid.). They need, like the sailors of Hölderlin's "Remembrance," to catch a northerly wind (ibid.) that will carry them south, and so return them to "that which has been at the commencement of their own and the homely" (p. 54), to Greece.

It might be objected that not merely Greece, but *any* "South"—the South of France, for instance, which Hölderlin visits in "Remembrance"—is an appropriate destination for the "Promethean" journey of the "fire"-seeker. Heidegger tends to be obsessed with the thought that the journey of appropriation must be a journey to a commencement. (For example, the Australasian's journey "Home," as Britain, until the 1960s, was referred to.) But this cannot be the only pattern for the fulfilment of Hölderlin's "law," since, for example, the Greeks, by Heidegger's own account, had no commencement to which to journey (cf. note 14 above). They *were* the commencement, the ultimately non-colonial culture, as it were. Hölderlin's "law" cannot, therefore, *identify* that foreign which facilitates homecoming with a commencement, on pain of rendering itself inapplicable to non-"colonial" cultures. Once again, one perceives a tension between the task of expressing general philosophical truth and that of explicating the particular journey described in the particular poem, "Der Ister."

5.

We have before us, now, Heidegger's two illustrations of Hölderlin's law, the law which says that being properly at home in the *Heimat* requires the completion of a journey through the foreign. What kind of journey is it that constitutes the journey of appropriation? Briefly, it is a "forgetting" that is also a "remembering." The journey must, in Hölderlin's words, be a "bold forgetting," in that it must constitute a genuine exposure to the foreign "in its foreignness" (pp. 54, 141). Since the entire point of the journey is to "learn from the foreign for the sake of what is one's own" (p. 132), it is demanded that there be no evading the otherness of the other. It is demanded, too, that the foreign must be "acknowledged" (*anerkannt*) in its otherness, its difference *respected*. For the journey's success, there must be no "rejecting (*zurückweisen*) or . . . annihilating" of the foreign (p. 54). If one retreats in horrified culture shock, or if one actively

attempts the annihilation of the foreign in an act of cultural or military imperialism, "what necessarily gets lost is the possibility of a passage through the foreign, and thereby the possibility of a return home into one's own" (ibid.).

In spite of this, the journey into the foreign always remembers, remains under "the spell of the *Heimat*" (p. 132). The traveller's experiences are always thoughtfully "relate[d] back . . . to the homely" (p. 75). "Presencing in the manner of an absencing" (ibid.), the *Heimat* pervades all his experience. In this respect, the Hölderlinian traveller contrasts with the "adventurer," one who, insofar as he is at home anywhere, finds himself at home in the foreign. The adventurer (the Nietzschean rather than Hölderlinian sailor), because his delight in the foreign is not embraced by a loving remembrance of the *Heimat* (p. 132), cannot gain from his experiences insight into his own "essence" (pp. 124-25). What this requirement precludes is "going native." There cannot be an assimilation to, an attempted "mixing" (p. 54) with, the foreign, for that precludes precisely the homecoming that is the ultimate purpose of the journey.

There are, therefore, two essential conditions on the journey that acquires the education needed to facilitate the appropriation of the *Heimat*. There must, first, be no assimilation of the different to the familiar, either by perceiving it through home-tinted spectacles or by destroying its difference through cultural or political oppression. But, equally, there must be no attempt to assimilate oneself to the other. Heidegger sums up this double requirement by saying that "only when the foreign is known and acknowledged [*anerkannt*] in its essential oppositional [*gegensätzlich*] character does there exist the possibility of a genuine relationship, that is, of a uniting that is not a confused mixing but a conjoining in distinction [*fügende Unterscheidung*]" (p. 54).[25] It is not difficult to see that "conjoining in distinction" has political implications. I shall elaborate on these in section 10 below.

6.

I suggested at the start that the "Ister" lectures shed important light, in the broadest sense of the term, on Heidegger's political stance in the middle of 1942. To understand this correctly, two historical circumstances need to be mentioned. The first is that Heidegger's lectures had been under the intermittent observation of the Gestapo since 1936, making it necessary for Heidegger to calculate carefully what he said and how he said it. The second is that the lecture course, occupying the Summer Semester, occurred before the Battle of Stalingrad. It preceded, too, El Alamein. Indeed, Rommel's recent capture of Tobruck became the focus for optimism about the German military situation and a widespread enthusiasm for the war that had not been matched since the fall of France. These facts are important, since it has been argued at length[26] that, until

Stalingrad, Heidegger's lectures constituted an enthusiastic rationalization of the German war effort, and that only after the Stalingrad defeat made it clear that Germany must lose the war did he make a (partial) retreat from this position. I shall group the themes that relate to Heidegger's political outlook under the following "isms": essentialism, social criticism, fatalism, chauvinism, Nazism, and Americanism.

7.

There is, we have seen, a great deal of talk in the "Ister" lectures about the *Heimat*, "one's own," as that which determines what is "fitting," or proper, to a particular mode of human being. Heidegger often speaks of this as a cultural "essence," a term which brings him within the target area of the generalized critique of "essentialism" that is widespread among post-structuralist French philosophers and those influenced by them. According to this critique, all forms of essentialism are reactionary and oppressive, for a cultural "essence" is nothing but a stereotype, the explicit or implicit function of which is to provide a ground for the suppression of liberationist—for example, gay or feminist—impulses. According to this style of thinking, there is, therefore, a natural movement from Heidegger's philosophy, from his essentialism, to the ultra-conservative politics of his involvement with Nazism.

A point worth making here is that, given the abandonment of ethical universalism almost always subscribed to by the "French" (what, after all, could be more oppressively essentialistic than ethical universalism?), the conclusion seems inescapable that the result of abandoning Heidegger's form of essentialism is ethical nihilism. For, if we cannot ground meaning and commitment in a "thick" facticity of the kind we saw Heidegger's essentialism amount to, then nothing remains as the ground of obligation save individual choice. The spirit of Sartre's radical freedom that hovers over French post-Structuralism is the spirit of nihilism. For whatever is grounded in individual choice can be ungrounded by that same power, and lacks, therefore, that unconditional authority which is, as Kant observed, definitive of moral obligation.

The stakes, then, are high, particularly for those unable to convince themselves of the truth of ethical universalism. The main point to be discussed in connection with Heidegger, however, is whether the Heideggerian *Heimat* really does amount to an oppressive cultural stereotype. I shall take up this question in the next section in conjunction with the issue of whether Heidegger can allow for the possibility of social criticism.

8.

One of the standard criticisms of, in particular, *Being and Time*, is that, while it may not have *demanded* Heidegger's 1933 commitment to Nazism, it was, nonetheless, culpable in its powerlessness to prevent or

forbid such a commitment.[27] The reason for this, it is alleged, is the vicious ethical relativism of Heidegger's philosophical outlook, which deprived him of any ground on which to base a critique of the public policy that prevailed in Nazi Germany. It is in relation to this charge that the discussion of Sophocles's *Antigone* in Part 2 of the "Ister" lectures is of central importance.

As Heidegger says, not a lot happens in the play. Antigone buries the body of her brother, Polynices, defying King Creon's order that, as a rebel and traitor, he should remain unburied. She is condemned to death by starvation, but hangs herself. Small wonder, then, that, along with Socrates, Antigone constitutes the first and most celebrated Western affirmation of the right of individual conscience to resist unjust laws of the state. A strange play, one might think, to discuss in the middle of the night of Nazi Germany.

According to Heidegger, the First Chorus of *Antigone* presents a vision of the essence of man, of man in relation to the cosmos, a vision that "resonates" within Hölderlin's poetry. This vision is encapsulated in the word *deinon*, which occurs at the beginning of the chorus: "Manifold is the uncanny, yet nothing/more uncanny towers or stirs beyond the human being."[28] *Unheimlich*—"uncanny"—is Heidegger's, as he recognizes, unexpected translation of *deinon*, the "fundamental word of this tragedy and even of Greek antiquity itself" (p. 63).

What does this crucial word mean? Its meaning is, suggests Heidegger, "manifold" (p. 68). It is ambiguous, ambivalent, Janus-faced, an ambivalence that revolves around four polarities. With respect to each, one pole represents human nobility, the other a "counter turning," a tragic turning of the human being against its own essence (pp. 83-84). The first polarity is between fear and awe; the "uncanny" may be the object of either. Second, while the uncanny one may be merely "violent" (*das Gewaltätige*), she may also be "powerful" (*das Gewaltige*), as a river or a mountain may be spoken of as powerful or mighty. As the latter, but only as the latter, the uncanny "can be something that towers above[29] us and then it approaches what is worthy of honour." As the violent, it is merely "frightful" (p. 75). The third polarity is a matter of being "inhabitual" (*ungewöhnlich*). This may be a matter of being merely exceptionally skilled within the sphere of the ordinary—skill being a matter of one kind of world "mastery" or another (ibid.)—or else of being genuinely extraordinary. (Schopenhauer calls this a distinction between "talent" and "genius.") The final polarity Heidegger introduces via a German pun: "*unheimlich*" (uncanny) is, he suggests, equivalent to "*unheimisch*" (unhomely).[30] So, the uncanny one is one who is not at home. Yet this notion, too, contains a polarity; one may be "unhomely" either in relation to beings or to Being. What does this contrast come to?

It is clear that the violent, merely skilled world-masterer is paradigmatically the one who is "at home (*zuhause*) on every passageway through beings," but is yet "excluded" from, "forgetful" of, Being (pp. 75-76). The "awesome," the sublime one, on the other hand, is the one who, though potentially alienated within the world of beings, is at home "in Being." As we have seen, the touchstone of one's stance is death. Since no skill can ward it off, the mere world-masterer must be evasive. The sublime one, by contrast, since she belongs not merely to beings but to Being itself, is already "beyond" death, and can thus acknowledge finitude without evasion.

What has all this to do with the possibility of social criticism? The chorus closes with an expulsion from the "hearth": "Towering high above the sight, forfeiting the site is he for whom non-beings always are for the sake of risk./Such shall not be entrusted to my hearth, nor share their delusion with my knowing, who put such a thing to work." Heidegger raises the crucial question of *who* it is that is expelled from the hearth. The fact that, at the beginning of the play, Antigone identifies her own essence as uncanniness raises the possibility, he observes (p.102), that it is she. But this would transform that chorus into a hymn to mediocrity, a song of hatred against the disturbance of the peace, and that, surely, cannot be the voice of the poet.

The penultimate line's distinction between "knowledge" and "delusion" pertains, Heidegger suggests, to what is "fitting" or "proper" in action. According to the Greek conception, the human will is always to act from that knowledge which is proper to the hearth (i.e., *Heimat*). Yet it is also always liable to action that constitutes a "counterturning." This, as we have observed, is not "sin"—wilful transgression, in the Christian sense—but, rather, a mistaking of what the chorus calls "non-beings" for beings, a risk that is written into the "site," since truth, as appearing, contains within itself the possibility of delusive appearance. It follows, according to this tragic yet magnificent vision of the human condition that life itself is a "risk" (or "venture," *Wagnis*). One lives with a constant vulnerability to factual and ethical "delusion."

Who, then, is expelled from the *Heimat*? The chorus rejects unhomeliness, says Heidegger, if it is mere arrogance, "a presumptuousness towards beings and within beings" (p. 115). Possibly for reasons of discretion, Heidegger does not care to make this explicit, but the arrogant one who has defied the unwritten, yet ancient and sacred, laws of the community is surely Creon. Presumption, *hubris*, arises, says Heidegger, from a "forgottenness of the hearth, that is, of Being." Yet unhomeliness can also be a thoughtful remembrance (*Andenken*) of Being" (ibid.) which is precisely what ruptures such forgetfulness, a reappropriation of the fundamental truths constitutive of the *polis*. Antigone shows no presumption. She is determined, as she explains, not by anything "within beings," but,

rather, by what is "beyond" not only "human ordinance" but even "the . . . gods" (p. 116). Thus, though Antigone describes her determining ground as "The immutable, unwritten edict divine," the play is *not* about a conflict between religion and the state (p. 118). Neither is it about the conflict between obligations to the family and obligations to the state. Rather, Antigone's ultimate determinant is that "which first bestows ground and necessity upon the distinction of the dead and the priority of blood" (p. 117).

In Heidegger's reading, therefore, it is not Antigone but Creon's "human ordinances" that fail to be "of the hearth"—are, that is, forgetful of the genuine *polis*, of Being. The application of this to the circumstances of 1942 is surely unmistakable; it is *Hitler* who is caught up in "presumptuousness towards and within beings," *his* ordinances that are forgetful of the fundamental *ethos* that is written into the Western and the German *Heimat*. Lest anyone miss the contemporary relevance of the discussion, lest anyone miss that it is the Nazi state that is being cast in the role of Creon, Heidegger remarks that the "active violence" of Nietzsche's "blond beast" is not the *meaning* of *deinon* but only an extreme consequence of its "counterturning" against its own proper essence (p. 90). Anyone who knows anything about Nietzsche knows that "the blond beast," "the blond *Teutonic* beast," is his name for that which lurks in the depths of the specifically German soul and creates "the profound and icy suspicion which the German arouses as soon as he assumes power" (*Genealogy of Morals* Part 1, section 11).

9.

Heidegger's reading of *Antigone* is a legitimization, in terms of his deepest thinking about the *Heimat*, of resistance to the Nazi state. And it is a condemnation of Nazi militarism. The public nature of the reading—the mere selection of Antigone as a topic for public discussion—makes it itself an act of resistance. The "Ister" lectures contain, however, references to the Nazi state of a considerably less circumspect character.

The Greek *polis* is not, Heidegger insists, a political concept. Yet today, he observes, in the majority of so-called "research results," the Greeks appear as "pure National Socialists." Such "overenthusiasm," he continues, choosing his words carefully, "does National Socialism in its historical uniqueness no service at all" (pp. 80-81). The trouble with these "enthusiasts" (i.e., party hacks) who discover the political everywhere—thus making earlier scholars look like "blind idiots" (ibid.)—and give it "priority" (p. 82), is that they confuse ground with consequence, condition with conditioned. In truth, the state must be explained (and, as occurs in *Antigone*, judged) in terms of the *polis*, not the *polis* in terms of the state (ibid.).

The "priority of the political" was, of course, the fundamental tenet of Nazi education policy. Political indoctrination was compulsory in the university curriculum; scientists were required to produce results that supported Nazi dogma. It is to Heidegger's credit that, even in the "Rectoral Address" given in 1933 at the height of his involvement with Nazism, he opposed absolutely the priority of the political.[31] What is deeply distressing about a great deal of modern "French" and feminist philosophy is the subordination of truth (or at least thought; to many it has seemed strategically useful to pronounce the death of objective truth) to the requirements of some supposedly liberationist politics or other. What is distressing, in other words, is the re-emergence of one of the central planks of totalitarianism, the "priority of the political."

10.

In the anti-Heidegger literature, a great deal has been made of his alleged German chauvinism—"metaphysical racism," as it is sometimes (obscurely) called. Generally, there are two components to this claim. First, it is claimed, Heidegger believes, with other Nazis, in the cultural superiority of the Germans to other races. Second, it is added, he supported his chauvinism with the claim of a unique relationship between the Germans and the Greeks. On account of a unique linguistic affinity, the Germans are the true and sole heirs of Greece, uniquely charged, in the decadent world of modernity, with a redemptive mission.[32] How do the 1942 lectures stand with regard to this characterization?

As we have seen, Heidegger's 1942 account of relations with the foreign is summed up in the idea of a "conjoining in distinction" (p. 54). Only if there is a "genuine," respectful, and appreciative relationship to the otherness of the other, a relationship which, at the same time, never attempts a merging of one's own identity into it, is there the possibility of that education in and through the foreign which, according to Hölderlin's "law," is necessary to becoming properly at home in the *Heimat*.

Heidegger's point here, his conception of the proper relationship to the other (whether it be personal, cultural, ethnic, or political), is surely that which emerges from Hegel's master-slave dialectic: that only when the other is seen and respected as distinct, free, and equal does there exist the possibility of a relationship of enlivenment and enrichment. Only, that is, under these circumstances, is it possible to gain, by comparison and contrast, clarity with regard to one's own unique identity. Only under these circumstances is it possible to learn from the other what is necessary to the "appropriation" of that identity.

This Hegelian thought had, in fact, been the basis of Heidegger's explicit thought about the proper relationship to the politically foreign since at least the early 1930s. The theme of the "community of nations (*Völkergemeinschaft*)" appears in several of the popular political speeches

he made as Rector of Freiburg University. In November 1933 he says, for example, "The will to a true community of nations is equally far removed both from an unrestrained, vague desire for world brotherhood and from blind tyranny. Existing beyond this opposition, this will allows peoples and states to stand to one another in an open and manly fashion as self-reliant entities."[33]

A more extended consideration of the same theme appears in the *Wege zur Aussprache* of 1937.[34] Only, he says there, "the courage for the recognition (*Anerkennung*) of the own (*das Eigene*) of the other" is capable of producing the "historically creative power of genuine mutual understanding (*echtes sichverstehen*)." This understanding can occur only in a genuine encounter (*Auseinandersetzung*), the paradigm of which is Leibniz's—that "most German of German thinkers"—running encounter with Descartes. (Presumably, what Heidegger has in mind here is that, having learned mind-body dualism from Descartes, Leibniz came to set himself apart by preferring "pre-established harmony" to the difficulties of mind-body interactionism.) Only such an encounter, the "form" of which is the "meeting of neighbours," can place each in his "own." This is true, also, of the Greeks; only their running encounter with the "Asian" brought them to their "uniqueness and greatness." (Notice that here Heidegger produces what is, in this respect, a better reading of Hölderlin's law than in the 1942 lectures, since, freed of the need to present everything as a reading of Hölderlin's journey to the Western "commencement," he is able to apply it to the "commencement"-less Greeks.)

Heidegger's stance to the foreign is, then, characterized by friendship (love even—after the war he followed Hölderlin in developing a passionate relationship with Provence and its people). It is characterized by respect and by the care for the preservation of the foreignness of the foreign which is entailed by such respect, a concern that the distinctness of cultures should not be mixed by the wheels of modernity into a homogenous porridge. It is a stance far removed from the portrait of a provincial, parochial, narrow-minded Swabian xenophobe that is offered by Victor Farias and others. It is, in fact, scarcely conceivable, had his disposition really been of this cast, that he could have entered into a productive relationship with the well-travelled, ultimately liberal, Francophile offspring of the French Revolution that Hölderlin, in reality, was.

What, then, of the supposed special relationship between the Germans and the Greeks? Hölderlin was, of course, a German poet who wrote in German for a German-speaking audience. His poetic "care," as we saw, was for a return of the Germans to their German *Heimat*. But, in Heidegger's reading, his care is not *exclusively* for the Germans. While Hölderlin's topic and concern is not, he explains, for a "universal humanity," neither is it merely for individuals, "nor even some form or other in which several or many human beings are united" (p. 43). It is not, then, care for

any particular political or ethnic group, but, rather, for "the essence of Western humankind" (ibid.). This generality of concern impels Heidegger into some cumbersome language. Hölderlin's care is, he says, "for the homecoming of the historical-Western humanity of the Germans"[35] (p. 69). "Something like a commencement" (p. 55) happened in Greece. But it is a commencement belonging equally to all Western cultures.

But do not the Germans remain closer to, less forgetful of, the commencement than other Western cultures, and therefore especially endowed to lead the West into a "new beginning"? Granted Heidegger's point that every language has its own unique *Geist*, is it not his view that the German language is *nearer* to Greek than other modern languages? And granted what emerged in the discussion of Hölderlin's "law" that the Greek is *somewhat* foreign with respect to the Germans, is it not Heidegger's view that it is far *less* so than with respect to other modern cultures?

Nowhere in the "Ister" lectures is there the remotest hint of any of this. On the contrary, Heidegger's concern throughout is to emphasize the "singularity" (p. 66) of the Greeks, the fact that "German humankind" is not merely later than, but is "intrinsically different" from, the Greek humankind (p. 124; cf. also p. 49, pp. 135-36). From this he concludes that there must be no "taking the Greek world as the measure or model for the perfection of humankind" (p. 54), no "humanistic . . . renaissance" (p. 124)—an attack, surely, on the degenerate classicism that was a commonplace of Nazi rhetoric and art. And, as we have just seen, he scorns the efforts of Nazi scholars to turn the Greeks into "pure National Socialists." These points, clearly, are consequences of Heidegger's account of the proper relationship to the foreign as "conjoining in distinction." Yet, the fact that he chose to emphasize them indicates that the idea of a special relationship between the Germans and the Greeks is one he is concerned, in 1942, not to endorse, but to *attack*.

11.

I have argued that Heidegger was, in 1942, in fundamental opposition to Nazism. Did he then call for its military defeat, as did, for example, Thomas Mann? Of course not. For while Mann was in Princeton, Heidegger was in Freiburg. Did he wish it, though? It seems not—not, at least, at any price. The evidence for this consists in the "Ister" lectures' hostile remarks about America and "Americanism," prompted by the recent entry of the United States into the war.

At pp. 54-55, Heidegger contrasts with the "conjoining in distinction" which we saw to constitute the proper relation to the foreign the desire for the "annihilation" of the other. This (the stage in Hegel's master-slave dialectic even more primitive than the enslavement of the other) is self-damaging, since it destroys the possibility of a return into "one's own" through the encounter with the foreign. But such annihilation is, Heideg-

ger claims, the hidden resolve behind America's entry into the war. Hence, "America's entry into this planetary war is not its entry into history; rather it is already the ultimate American act of American ahistorically[36] and self devastation." Later on, Heidegger claims that the reduction of every quality to quantity—itself a kind of quality—is the essence of "Americanism." This, he says, is the real danger, Bolshevism being (here he modifies the well-known remark from the 1935 *Introduction to Metaphysics* [p. 37] that America and Russia are "metaphysically the same") "only a derivative kind of Americanism" (p. 70).

Taken out of context, these remarks touch, fairly clearly, a nerve. Heidegger is not alone in experiencing the "Macdonaldization" of the world as a kind of "annihilation" of the different, and the remark about Bolshevism might well be taken as a prescient anticipation of the outcome of the Cold War. In context, however, the remarks betray an intemperate failure to identify what it was that, in 1942, constituted the highest danger.

Heidegger failed to see the overriding importance of a Nazi defeat as justifying the deployment of any and all available means. What, then, in 1942, did he want to happen? Would he have supported the resistance movement that culminated, in 1944, in von Stauffenberg's attempt to assassinate Hitler? Did he perhaps wish for a negotiated, above all *European*, peace that would have removed the Nazis but saved Germany from humiliation? Quite possibly. The truth is that we do not know. Possibly Heidegger himself did not know. Possibly he had, in 1942, failed to achieve any fully resolved stance to the war.[37]

Notes

1 *Gesamtausgabe*, Vols. 39, 52, and 53 (Frankfurt a.M: Klostermann, 1978–); hereafter referred to as "GA" followed by the appropriate number.

2 McNeill and Davis have made a fine job of an extraordinarily difficult task. Though sticking as closely as possible to the sentence- and even word-structure of the original, they manage to present an English text that is about as close as it is possible to get to the German original. The four or five points at which I question their translations I shall mention as I come to them.

3 Suzanne Ziegler, *Heidegger, Hölderlin und die* Aletheia (Berlin: Duncker u. Humblot, 1991), p. 224.

4 Otto Pöggeler, *Martin Heidegger's Path of Thinking* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1987), p. 189.

5 This point should be taken quite literally. Take, for instance, the troublesome word "found" (*stiften*). Heidegger frequently says things like "the homeland (or the *polis*) is founded by the poet," which has led many to the conviction that he proposes a kind of inverted Platonism, a poet-dictator (see my *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997], chap. 4). To understand how far this is from the truth, one needs to recognize that Heidegger takes over "found" from Hölderlin's line, "Yet what

remains the poet founds" (p. 151—hereafter unadorned page numbers refer to the McNeill and Davis volume) and then to investigate, in its entirety, his Hölderlin-inspired account of the poet, the poet's vocation, and the poet's relation to Being, gods, and community.

6 In his celebrated Heidegger critique, *Of Spirit*, Jacques Derrida argues that the ground of Heidegger's involvement with Nazism was his entanglement in the Metaphysics of *Geist*. Only at the end of his career, and then only partially, did Heidegger see the need to "deconstruct" the idea of spirit as substance. The real deconstruction, he implies, is carried out in his own work. (See my *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism*, chap. 3, section 17.) Evidently, Derrida never read the "Ister" lectures.

7 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 15-89.

8 Young, *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism*.

9 Adrian del Caro, *Hölderlin: the Poetics of Being* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), p. 62: "The prefix *father* when attached [in German] to locations like *house* or *city* indicates one's origins; German *Vaterhaus* corresponds to one's paternal house, while *Vaterstadt* corresponds to one's home or native town. It is later on in nineteenth- and especially twentieth-century Germany that *Vaterland* assumes the political, nationalistic dimensions that make Hölderlin's poems superficially suspect."

10 Heidegger vigorously resists this way of putting things (pp. 16-20) but is, I believe, mistaken in doing so. Using the term "symbolic image" (*Sinnbild*) to cover image, allegory, symbol (*Symbole*), simile, and metaphor (the distinctions here, he suggests, are vague and "fluid" [p.16]), he claims that to say the language of poetry is essentially imagistic is to commit oneself to the view that poetry is essentially the presentation in sensuous (*sinnlich*) terms of something that is, in itself, non-sensuous, i.e., "suprasensuous," i.e., "spiritual," i.e., Platonic. But while the broad sweep of Western art has, indeed, been committed to the "metaphysics" of Platonism, it is a perversion of an essentially non-"metaphysical" poet to read this into Hölderlin.

Rather evidently, however, the "i.e."s here represent, not necessary connections, but, at best, linkages that have frequently been made in the history of Western art and æsthetics. Moreover, Heidegger himself—who holds, as we will see, that truly significant poetry (such as Hölderlin's) evokes, "poeticizes," Being—writes, later on (referring, evidently, to Greek poetry), that "mythology," far from being "some doctrine of the gods invented by humans because they are not yet mature enough to do exact physics and chemistry," is the way in which "Being itself comes to appear poetically," and, as such, stands in an "originary (*ursprünglich*)" relation to his own "essential thinking" (p. 111). He himself holds, therefore, that poetry is essentially "mythological." Since he offers "legends and fairy tales" as instances of allegory (p. 16) he is thus, in fact, *committed to* the view that great poetry is essentially imagistic. There is a great deal more to be said on this topic.

11 New Zealand poets James K. Baxter, Sam Hunt, and Gary McCormack, for instance—perhaps New World poets in general— are particularly conscious of this vocation. McCormick named his 1995 TVNZ series of celebrations of uniquely New Zealand locations "Heartland"—poetically speaking, perhaps the closest English can get to "*Heimat*."

12 At one place, Heidegger betrays this distinction. Though he here describes "Americanism" (see, further, section 11 below) as unhistorical (*ungeschichtlich*), earlier (p. 55) he had described it as *a*historical (*geschichtslos*). Presumably the point of the later correction is to cancel the unintended implication that Americans are *Untermenschen*.

13 See Young, *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism*, chap. 3.

14 Heidegger wishes us to hear, here, the connection between *Statt* (places, stead) and *gestattet* (to be permitted).

15 Heidegger speaks of pre-Socratic Greece as the place where "something like a commencement" (p. 55), the "commencement" of the West happened, but he does not, of course, mean to deny the debt of Greece to pre- and non-Hellenic cultures. The claim is, rather, that the distinctively Western unity of art, thought, religion, morals, politics, the law, and so on—this "relationship . . . between the relationships"—first happened in Greece.

16 Making a related point in the context of warning against understanding *Antigone* too quickly through the lens of Christianity, Heidegger points out that, in Greece, there were no "silent sufferers," no "martyrs" (p. 103).

17 Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), pp. 44, 18.

18 Gary Wills points out that pre-modern cities always had a sacred centre. In Greece, "a temple, an *arx* (citadel), a hearth fire, an acropolis," in Mediæval times a holy tomb (St. Peter's in Rome, St. Mark's in Venice), a relic (St. John the Baptist's arm in Florence), or a patron saint (London being the city of St. Paul, Paris of Our Lady). By contrast, he suggests, "There is no more defining note in our [America's] history than the total absence of a sacred city on our soil. We never had a central cultic place." Hence, America is a culture of "departures, not arrivals" (of, that is, homelessness), a culture epitomized by John Wayne and the Wild West (Gary Wills, "American Adam," *New York Review of Books*, 64, 4 [1993]: 30-33). Though I am sympathetic to Wills's point, I am inclined to believe that he is overfocused on the idea of an institutionally provided "centre" of holiness. In a rural community, for example, it may be the landscape (or riverscape)—something non-institutional, that is — which provides the community with its source of "radiance." In the city, it may perhaps be that there are many different institutionally constituted "centres" through which different citizens gain access to the sacredness of their place.

19 See my *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), chap. 3, sections 7-11.

20 It might be suggested that the foregoing discussion plays upon an insidious duality within the notion of *Heimat*. On the one hand, it is said to be the locus

of ultimate security, which is the ground of its being required to be a holy place. On the other, it is *das Eigene*, the place whose ethical commitments I take as my commitments on account of my *belonging* there. But surely, it may be said, I can belong somewhere, yet fail to find, in the defined sense, ultimate security. (Positivists can find a *Heimat*, too!) Hence, commitment and holiness fall apart. The background to Heidegger's implicit assumption that one can only truly belong where one also finds ultimate security is the theme from §53 of *Being and Time* that death "individualizes." Unless we can "overcome" death, we will see that "all being-with others [in the *polis*] will fail us when our ownmost potentiality-for-being is the issue."

21 See Young, *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism*, p. 39.

22 In the *Phaedrus*, Plato complains about the lack of system in the rhetorical practice of the sophists, and he takes himself to be the inventor of the method of "collection and division" which is what is needed to turn rhetoric and psychology from mere knacks into sciences.

23 It might be asked why *this* journey into the foreign should be *the poet's* journey, given that what the early Greeks suffered from was, in effect, an *excess* of "poetry." The answer is that Heidegger has simply made a mistake, one of several mistakes which have their source in the attempt to contain everything he wishes to say *qua* philosopher within the rubric of Hölderlin-exposition. Hölderlin's own journey of appropriation, the journey described by "Der Ister," is, indeed, a poet's journey. But not every instancing of Hölderlin's law needs to, or can, have the character of Hölderlin's own instancing of it.

24 This comes from Karl Löwith's report of his meeting with Heidegger in Rome in 1936; see R. Wolin, ed., *The Heidegger Controversy* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1993), p. 142. To be compared with it is Heidegger's remark about the "frenzy" of the "unrestricted organization of the average man" in the 1935 *Introduction to Metaphysics*, translated by R. Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 37. The full import of this remark depends on the long passage which runs from pp. 37-50.

25 The powerful echoes, here, of *Being and Time*'s account, in §26, of authentic "care" for others as the kind of relationship which "frees the other in his freedom for himself" suggest that Heidegger had long been in possession of this account of the proper relationship between oneself and the (personal or supra-personal) other.

26 See Young, *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism*, chap. 5, for bibliographical references.

27 Ibid., chap. 3, §14 ff.

28 I have altered McNeill and Davis's translation for reasons given in the next note.

29 The German here is "*überragend.*" McNeill and Davis translate it in terms of "looming over." To my ear, however, that which "looms over" is not a possible object of "honour."

30 Kathleen Wright, "Heidegger's Hölderlin and the Mo(u)rning of History," *Philosophy Today*, 37 (Winter 1993): 423-35. Wright suggests that there is no genuine etymological connection between the two words, that the overlap is merely phonemic. But this invalidates Heidegger's point no more than the point that motivates the feminists' replacement of the "his" by "her" in "history" is invalidated by the fact of a merely phonemic overlap between "his" and "history."

31 See Young, *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism*, chap. 1, §6.

32 Ibid., see "Afterword."

33 Quoted in Wolin, ed., *The Heidegger Controversy*, p. 48 (cf. p. 50).

34 In G. Schneeberger, ed., *Nachlese zu Heidegger* (Bern: Suhr, 1962), pp. 258-62; also in GA 13, pp.15-21.

35 *Der Deutschen*. McNeill and Davis have "for the Germans," but, to my ear, this reading of the genitive produces a result more opaque than is necessary.

36 See note 14 above.

37 Heidegger writes that, since the essence of modernity is world-disclosure or "spirit," it is childish to suppose we could turn history back to a pre-technological era. Then he says, according to McNeill and Davis's translation, "All that remains is to unconditionally actualize this spirit so that we simultaneously come to know the essence of its truth" (p. 53). This, however, seems to me a mistranslation of *"Es bleibt nur die unbedingte Verwirklichung dieses Geistes . . . "* which actually says, "All that remains *is the* unconditional actualization of this spirit." The point is important, since, as well as rendering the passage incoherent, the mistranslation plays into the hands of those who try to argue that, before Stalingrad, Heidegger adopted a position of Nietzschean, "positive," epoch-concluding nihilism in order to provide an enthusiastic, philosophical rationalization of the German war effort (see Young, *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism*, chap. 5).

4

Poetic Dwelling on the Earth as a Mortal

Being and Time offers an iconoclastic way of thinking about what it means to be a human being, a way that promises escape from the Western philosophical tradition of transcendental subjectivity. Dasein is not the mighty ego-subject that alone grants meaning to brute matter, and Dasein's world is not a collection of objects lying present-to-hand before such a godlike—godlike not least in its tendency to vanish upon close inspection—center of reflexive consciousness. Dasein and its world always already interpenetrate; we are all—persons and our things—holistic social practices all the way down. But for all its distance from the discarnate self ordained by our dominant philosophical tradition, and its equal distance from the more rugged self we typically and unreflectively take ourselves to be, Heidegger's Dasein is still recognizably *us* in a crucial respect: it remains subject to our mood of normal nihilism. The ordinary *Pathos* of our constitutive linguistic and behavioral practices, and thus the ordinary pathos of the selves and lives those practices make possible, is inevitably diminished by Dasein's philosophical reflection on the conditions of their origin: a reflection instantiated in *Being and Time* itself, of course.

Heidegger recognized this consequence of his work, I believe, and beginning in the middle 1930s he sought to avoid it. One important motive behind the turn in his thinking was to find a way to be true to his critique of transcendental subjectivity while at the same time escaping the diminished *Pathos* of Dasein's world and life.[1] Early and

1. I do not claim it to be the only motive. As I have already indicated, Heidegger's work is rich enough to support several illuminating readings of its underlying motivations; mine is only one of them.

late, Heidegger is struggling to give an account of human being that doesn't identify us as *res cogitans,* but in *Being and Time* his account of Dasein ridicules Descartes only to find itself impersonating Nietzsche: the things of Dasein's world have their original Being as *Dasein's* things; they are what they are only as the products of—the expressions of—Dasein's "will to power"; that is, its attempt to preserve and enhance itself within the life into which it has been thrown. Things are *Zeug* ("gear"), and their significance—their Being—is granted them by their place as such equipment within some ongoing public project(s) of Dasein.

Even Dasein itself is, proximally and for the most part, a kind of *Zeug:* as a teacher I stand alongside the lectern and the chalkboard and the textbooks and the students as part of an endlessly elaborating linguistic and behavioral practice we call *education.* Just as the lectern in my classroom is only one among many, with its marginal differences from other lecterns playing little if any role in the practices of teaching and learning, so too am I only one among many, with my differences from other philosophy teachers coming into play only at the margins. If I were suddenly to die in the middle of term, I would soon be replaced by a colleague: the remaining lectures would be delivered, more or less as I would have delivered them; the final papers would be marked, more or less as I would have marked them; and the course grades would be assigned, more or less as I would have assigned them. The ship sails on, whatever the changes in the crew. Dasein too is—is *only*—will to power: a set of linguistic and behavioral practices both older than anything distinctively "mine" and always already devoted to their own preservation and enhancement; a will to power utterly without centralized self-consciousness or genuine personality. No wonder we are diminished by such self-knowledge.

In the later work there is an attempt to be post-Cartesian in another key. Without reverting either to Idealism or to transcendental ego-subjectivity, Heidegger wants to find an account of being human that, as he says, *lets things be.* Just as *Being and Time* intended to replace the philosophical representation of the *res cogitans* with the more "original" existential phenomenology of Dasein, his later work too is devoted to revealing a particular and "more primordial" way of understanding what it means to be a human being: he wants to uncover what it means *to dwell poetically on the earth as a mortal.*[2] That

2. It is important to note that one doesn't need to buy into Heidegger's assumption that the way of being human (i.e., the particular set of social practices) he wants to

is his summary phrase—or the most important one of them—intended to direct our attention to the kind of human life he wants to celebrate and to foster, the kind of life that escapes (so he believes) the dangers consequent upon our normal nihilism. In this chapter we shall look closely at each element of that life, a life described most fully in four essays published in the early 1950s, "Building Dwelling Thinking," "The Thing," "'. . . Poetically Man Dwells . . .'," and "The Question Concerning Technology."[3] Our approach to poetic dwelling will make its way by examining Heidegger's account of *the thing,* as it is in the character of the thing that the character of the life which produced that thing becomes visible. We shall begin by returning briefly to the thing as it is understood in *Being and Time.*

Things as Gear

An understanding of the self and an understanding of the self's world are always given together. The transcendental ego-subject, for example, cannot be without its various objects of representation; philosophical subjectivity and philosophical objectivity are notions precisely

plump for here is somehow "more original" or "deeper" than the one advocated by Descartes or by Plato, or that its claim on our attention is somehow justified by that alleged depth or originality. The point is a general one: in order to find value in (some of) what Heidegger says, one doesn't need to accept the implausible and totalitarian myths to which his most interesting claims are usually joined. The most pervasive, and perhaps most dangerous, of those myths is a myth of origins: that there was a pure and primordial state of grace from which we here in the West have gradually withdrawn, a state of grace somehow preserved in some Greek texts (and some poems of Hölderlin), and a state of grace to which we long to, or at least need to, return. This sort of story (and there's much more to it in Heidegger's version, of course) strikes me as both unwholesome and hugely implausible. At any rate, I think the most important of Heidegger's claims—those about "technology," "standing-reserve," "poetic dwelling," "the clearing," and so forth—can be detached from any such mythical trappings. As this chapter progresses, I shall be trying to thresh the philosophical wheat from the mythical chaff.

3. "Building Dwelling Thinking" (hereafter cited as "BDT," followed by a page number), "The Thing" (hereafter cited by "T," followed by a page number), and "'. . . Poetically Man Dwells . . .'" (hereafter cited as "PMD," followed by a page number) are all to be found in Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought,* trans. Albert Hofstader (New York: Harper and Row, 1971. Page numbers in my text refer to this volume. "The Question Concerning Technology" (hereafter cited as "QT," followed by a page number) is found in Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays,* trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977). Page references in my text will be to this volume.

made for one another. So it is in *Being and Time* as well: the account of Dasein and the account of Dasein's world are correlative. As we have seen, part of the burden of *Being and Time* was to give an account of Dasein's world as a world of *things,* where things were understood not as the Cartesian *res* but as Greek *pragmata.* "The Greeks had an appropriate term for 'Things': *pragmata*—that is to say, that with which one has to do in one's concernful dealings (*praxis*)" (*BT,* 96f.). But in spite of the truth of their initial linguistic insight, the Greeks left the character of such things essentially unthought: "[T]hey thought of these 'proximally' as 'mere Things'" (*BT,* 97). This essentially thoughtless understanding of the thing was taken up into the Latin *res* and eventually became the representational object set over against the transcendental ego-subject of Cartesianism. *Being and Time* offered an account of the thing that moved it past Cartesian objectivity in two major respects. First, in Heidegger's account the Being of a thing is always already holistic: Things are the things they are only in terms of a set of back-and-forth references to lots of other things, things that also depend upon such references for their Being. The Being of my pen—its sense, its meaning, its significance as the particular kind of thing it is—is given by its place within such a holistic network, a network constantly humming with simultaneous back-and-forth references among the things that compose it. The *pen* writes with *ink,* on a piece of *paper,* bound in a *notebook,* placed on a *desk,* taking down words from the *chalkboard,* words written there by the *teacher,* for the use of the *student.* . . . To understand the Being of any one of these things is necessarily to understand the Being of some indefinite number of the others.

Second, this holistic network of back-and-forth references that grant Being to things has a particular character. To see, as the Greeks dimly did, that things are *pragmata* is to see that they are what they are in relation to our "concernful dealings." The network of things is a network of *praxis.* Thus things are, as Heidegger famously put it, equipment: *das Zeug,* "gear" to be used in the various projects of Dasein. The pen, the paper, the ink are (i.e., have their Being as) Dasein's writing gear, and Dasein's writing gear has (part of) its Being as (part of) Dasein's educational gear, and so on. If particular things are granted their Being as particular things by their holistic references to other particular things, then it is the various projects of Dasein that provide the context—that provide, to use a later Heideggerian word, the "clearing"—within which those back-and-forth references between things are possible. For things understood as *Zeug,* Dasein—understood always and only as the "they-self," as self-elaborating social practices "all the way down"—is the condition of their Being, of their sense, of their significance as the things they are. Thus in a notorious passage in *Being and Time* Heidegger seems to reduce all of "Nature" to equipment for Dasein: "The wood is a forest of timber, the mountain a quarry of rock; the river is water-power, the wind is wind 'in the sails.' As the 'environment' [i.e., as Dasein's *Umwelt*] is discovered, the 'Nature' thus discovered is encountered too" (*BT,* 100).

Later in that same paragraph, even Nature characterized as Romantic grandeur and pathos ("the flowers of the hedgerow," "the springhead in the dale") is described as what "assails *us* and enthralls *us* as *landscape*" (*BT,* 100; my emphasis). As "landscape," as a tableau set there for us to see and to enjoy (and perhaps ultimately to be enshrined in a *Kurort* brochure or made the destination of a tourist bus), the flowers and the spring fundamentally "belong to" Dasein for their Being.[4] They remain, in the broadest sense, a kind of *Zeug* (recreation gear, refreshment gear, *Naturreligion* gear, at the limit even absolute otherness gear). One way or another, and even if only by way of privation, they take their Being from our "concernful dealings" with our world.

So in *Being and Time* Heidegger has moved our understanding of things (and thus of the world, understood there as a world of things) past the understanding of them as Cartesian *res,* as objects of representation set before a transcendental subject. But for Heidegger after the turn, this movement does not go nearly far enough. Even *Being and Time*'s "pragmatic" understanding of things makes them a sort of "object," in this case an object of Dasein's use in its various "dealings" with the world. Flowers, trees, and clear running water are always somehow there *for us,* and this sense of their being conditioned by Dasein's needs and purposes saps some (though not, of course, all) of their *Pathos.* A "landscape," however pristine and beautiful, is not the grandeur of Yosemite or the holy silence of Paestum. No piece of our "gear," however impressive, intricate, and effective it may be, has the modest and pregnant gravity of the Greek urn or of Cézanne's earthenware bowl holding apples. In the "pragmatic" account of them in *Being and Time,* things are devaluated, stripped of some of their customary pathos, as is the life within which those things have their original Being.

Thus even in its deft evasion of Cartesianism, *Being and Time* re-

4. It is important to see that this is not metaphysical and epistemological idealism of the Berkeleyan sort. It's not the "brute actuality" of things that depends on Dasein; it's their Being, understood as sense, as significance.

mains unaware (according to Heidegger) of its captivity to something more insidious, something older and more powerful, something of which Cartesianism was—for all its genius—only a particular and incomplete expression. It is this older and craftier understanding of things that condemns even the Dasein of *Being and Time* to the destiny of normal nihilism as foretold by Nietzsche; and it is this understanding of things that Heidegger is trying to replace in the later work. He calls this nihilistic understanding *die Technik:* technology. It is technology that stands in the way of our full "poetic dwelling on the earth as mortals."

Technology and *Bestand*

For most of us the word "technology" calls to mind the use of machines and tools, especially machines and tools powered by nonhuman sources of energy, to attain and to further human interests. This familiar idea is what Heidegger calls "the instrumental and anthropological definition" of technology ("QT," 5), and of course it is correct so far as it goes. But there is, he thinks, a deeper, more revealing, "truer" way to characterize technology; a way to characterize its "essence." The key is to see that technology is itself a way of revealing things, a way of letting something come to presence. The world for Heidegger, early and late, is always a world of things, and the world of technology we all inhabit is distinguished by the particular way in which in that world things are revealed as the kind of things they are: "Technology is therefore no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing. If we give heed to this, another whole realm for the essence of technology will open itself up to us. It is the realm of revealing, i.e., of truth" ("QT," 12).

For Heidegger, truth is not fundamentally the correspondence of some representation with the reality it represents; truth is the coming into presence of something in such a way that it can be seen for what it is.[5] Truth is dis-closure, un-covering, un-concealment. Technology bring things into presence—lets them be seen—in a particular way; it reveals them as having a particular character, a particular Being. In that way technology belongs to the realm of *aletheia;* it is, one might say, a kind of truth. Thus technology is not, for Heidegger,

5. See Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," reprinted in Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings,* ed. David F. Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1977). He takes back the identification of truth and *aletheia;* see below, this chapter.

primarily the machines and the power-tools we usually associate with the term: it is not just the hydroelectric plant on the banks of the Rhine or the superconducting supercollider half-buried in the Texas plains. Technology is a way—according to Heidegger, it is now the *fundamental* way—in which the world of human beings is constituted and populated; it is an overarching set of linguistic and behavioral practices that allow our things to appear around us in a particular way, that give to the things that appear in our world a particular Being, a particular significance, a particular sense. The machines and tools we think of as distinctively "technological," such as power plants and particle accelerators, are just the most obvious instances of the Being of *all* (or at least almost[6] all) our things as they are constituted by our most basic social practices.

And what is that characteristically technological Being of things?

> The revealing that rules throughout modern technology has the character of a setting-upon, in the sense of a challenging-forth. Such challenging happens in that the energy concealed in nature is unlocked, what is unlocked is transformed, what is transformed is stored up, what is stored up is in turn distributed, and what is distributed is switched about ever anew. Unlocking, transforming, storing, distributing, and switching about are ways of revealing. . . .
>
> What kind of unconcealment is it, then, that is peculiar to that which results from this setting-upon that challenges? Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately on hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering. Whatever is ordered about in this way has its own standing. We call it the standing-reserve [*Bestand*]. . . . [The word *Bestand*] designates nothing less than the way in which everything presences that is wrought upon by the challenging revealing. Whatever stands by in the sense of standing-reserve no longer stands over against us as object. ("QT," 16f.)

The characteristic kind of thing brought to light by the practices of technology is *Bestand,* "standing-reserve": that which in an orderly way awaits our use of it for the further ordering of things. When I walk down to my study in the morning and glance at the computer on the desk, the computer, as the thing it is, is *Bestand.* It reveals itself to me as waiting patiently for me to turn it on, to "get its things in order," so I can use it to order and reorder those things and others.

6. The qualification will become important later on.

The data stored there—words, sentences, thoughts, bank balances—await my command so they can be transformed, distributed, and switched about: they too are *Bestand.* And it's not just the glass-and-plastic machines that reveal themselves to me as standing-reserve. As I glance out the window onto the leaves I have not yet raked, they too are *Bestand:* they patiently await my collection of them so they can be put on the compost heap ("stored up" so the energy in them can later be "unlocked") or bagged for the garbage collection ("switched about"). The very house I inhabit is, as we have famously been told, "a machine for living in," with the window out of which I gaze a device for the orderly collection of light (and the orderly retention of heat). The house patiently awaits its tenants for their use of it in ordering their lives; the land on which the house sits reveals itself through the window as garden and as landscape, waiting for the orderly touch that shapes and preserves and cultivates. The mugs on the kitchen shelf, the television in the loft, the cereal in the pantry, the toothbrush on the bathroom sink: all "stand by" ("QT," 17) in the manner of "stock," as resources awaiting their call to orderly use in the ordering of things.

For us (almost) everything reveals itself as *Bestand.* Most of the time, of course, we are not explicitly aware that our things have that sort of Being. Our consciousness of them as "standing-reserve" shows itself not in anything we say or think about them; rather, it shows itself in how we comport ourselves to them in unself-conscious everyday action and reaction. How I "see" my television set or my coffee mug or my toothbrush shows itself in the way I carelessly handle them, in the way my eye passes over them without a pause, in the way I irritably react when they don't perform as expected, in the thoughtless way I dispose of them when they are no longer useful, and so forth. When I press the remote-control button that turns on the television set, I don't punch it with the same delicacy of movement that a father might use in playfully poking his child in the ribs to tickle him; when I pick up my mug at the breakfast table there is no tactile attention to its surface in the way there might be when I am handling a piece of sculpture or stroking my cat's fur; when my toothbrush is worn out I don't burn or bury it (as Scouts are taught to do with the country's flag)—I pitch it into the garbage and hurriedly rip another from its package. In all these unreflective ways (and others) I show what these things are for me: "standing-reserve."

And the things just named wonderfully conspire in our treatment of them as *Bestand.* The deftly shaped buttons on the television's remote control are made to be punched again and again (by anyone) with no

delicacy or attention, just as the white ceramic coffee mug is intended to offer to my hand (and to any hand) no resistance or interest.[7] These things, like the toothbrush and innumerable others, are supposed to "disappear" into our use of them; they are supposed to be there for us only insofar as they are useful without impediment and without our careful scrutiny. "In themselves" they are, one wants to say, anonymous and interchangeable; they have no reality for us as particular things. My television set looks and performs much like every other one, and certainly my coffee mug and my toothbrush are virtually indistinguishable from an indefinitely large number of similar objects. Today's breakfast Grape-Nuts taste exactly like yesterday's—and (this is the crucial point) *that's what makes them what they are.* That anonymous interchangeability is what makes all these things the kind of thing they are; that's what gives them their Being as *Bestand.* Their nature, one might say, is to have only a general nature, a nature exhausted by their impersonal usefulness to us. All these things suppress their reality as particular things. Or, to put it more precisely (but in a way that will demand further exposition), all these things are things the Being of which covers over the manifold conditions of their coming to presence.

So the things that appear in a technological world appear as some kind of *Bestand.* But why should this be so? Why should technology reveal things in that particular way, as having that particular kind of Being? Here we are asking after the essence of technology: "We now name that challenging claim which gathers man thither to order the self-revealing as standing-reserve: *Ge-stell* [Enframing]" ("QT," 19).

The appearance of things as *Bestand* is the inevitable result of those social practices that have as their nature and point what Heidegger calls *ordering.* In his highly wrought idiom (an idiom certainly not "anonymous and interchangeable"), technology is a "challenging-forth" ("QT," 16), and "that challenging gathers man into ordering. This gathering concentrates man on ordering the real into standing-reserve" ("QT," 19).

What is this ordering? The dominant social practices constituting our world are practices that "enframe": they are practices that put things in their proper places in such a way that they are readily available to be put to use by us with a maximum of efficiency and a minimum of attention to the conditions of their appearing. Such practices impose a "grid" (*Gestell,* frame) upon things so that within that

7. Here there is no necessary implication that anyone in particular consciously said or thought, "Let's make the mug this way."

grid—within the completely and immediately surveyable space created by that grid—those things are completely and immediately locatable and thus are completely and immediately available for whatever use we find it appropriate to put them to. In this way things are made *orderly.* They are located within a frame that transparently orients us to them and them to us; as a result of that perspicuous orientation within the frame they are ours to use and reuse easily and quickly and essentially thoughtlessly. And the point of our use of our orderly things is further ordering. Under the spell of technology, we come to order things primarily for the sake of ordering itself.

Of course the "frames" Heidegger has in mind here are *conceptual* frames; following Rorty we might call them *vocabularies.* Technological practices are first of all practices of careful and precise linguistic categorization. They are practices that "enframe" by way of assigning clear senses to the things they constitute: the more clearly and completely we can say what kind of thing it is we are talking about, the more available that thing for what we want to do with it. In the world of technology there should be no linguistic surplus value. Meaning and use should exactly coincide. That way of putting the matter is a bit misleading, however, since it makes it seem that (1) knowing what something is and means and (2) being able to do something with it are two different matters, and that the first is the best path to the second. In the world of technology, however, the two are precisely the same; they are simultaneously given in the notion of *Bestand.* Things are what they are only insofar as they patiently await our orderly use of them in our ordering of things.

Three techniques of erasure help secure the dominance of these technological practices. First, there is the erasure of the particular frame itself. Our dominant social practices seek—usually successfully—to obscure the fact that they are just our dominant social practices. They are practices that, through a shrewd combination of opportunistic rhetoric and institutional power, present themselves as not just the truth about things but as obvious common sense. Think how often one hears it said (or at least implied): "Only a fool would deny that . . ." What replaces the ellipsis varies from platform to platform, but each such appeal to our "obvious common sense"—"Obviously that is a toothbrush"; "Obviously Yosemite Valley is there for us to enjoy"; "Obviously the spotted owl is not worth thousands of jobs"; "Obviously there are some moral absolutes"—is a way of disguising the particular conceptual and institutional "frames" that make the appeals effective (or not) in the first place. Each is a way, perhaps decisive in certain instances, of causing us to forget that our particu-

lar way of placing things in relation to one another and to ourselves is itself a particular historical construction. Technology is a frame that blinds us to itself as a frame. It is a way of revealing that makes us forget that it is *a* way of revealing.

Second, technological practices obscure not just their own character as particular ways of revealing things; they more generally blind us to the necessity of there being "ways of revealing" at all. Operating within such practices we forget not just that *this* particular account of things is contingent; we forget that such contingency is the condition of *any* account of what a thing is. "Thus the challenging Enframing . . . conceals revealing itself and with it that wherein unconcealment, i.e., truth, comes to pass" ("QT," 27). Under the spell of characteristically technological practices we forget "revealing itself"; that is, we forget history, and ourselves as historical beings. We forget that—to use a Nietzschean image—perspective is not just an accident of this or that particular vocabulary or social practice; perspective is the necessary condition of any seeing at all. We are not gods, and our lack of a divine standpoint is not an unfortunate accident perhaps at some point to be remedied. All our seeing is, and always will be, a perspectival seeing; all our seeing will come as the result of a "revealing"; that is, as the result of some contingent concatenation of opportunities and abilities, conceptual and otherwise. Engaged in certain practices—the ones Heidegger calls *technological*—we forget this necessary contingency, this necessary historical condition of all our thinking and acting.

Third, technological practices erase the particular conditions of the particular things they bring to presence. Here it is useful to think again about coffee mugs, toothbrushes, and Post Grape-Nuts. Specific instances of these things are, as I put it above, largely anonymous and interchangeable. This coffee mug looks and feels no different from that one; this bowl of Grape-Nuts tastes just like the one I had yesterday; any Oral-B 60 is much the same as any other.[8] What is crucial to see is that this anonymity and this interchangeability are not just accidents, and not just unfortunate features of living in a society rich enough to mass-produce breakfast foods and implements of personal hygiene; they are essential to our need for these things readily to "disappear" into our use of them. In practices given over (as Heidegger thinks almost our whole life is) to ordering for the sake of ordering, the more easily and quickly an entity can be thoughtlessly

8. Of course there are differences at the margins. The point is that those differences, to the extent they can't be suppressed, are not supposed to matter.

taken up into its particular task of ordering, the better. Explicit attention to the tool one is using distracts one from the job the tool is being used to accomplish and in that way makes the successful completion of the job less likely. If I notice the texture of the handle of my coffee mug, and then begin to wonder how it was made, and maybe even to wonder who made it, and under what conditions, I may be led into a train of thought that disrupts my normal and efficient progress from breakfast to newspaper to car to classroom, thus introducing a bit of disorder into my quite ordinary life. And—to push the matter in a more sentimental and unlikely direction—if I become aware of the fact that my mug was made in China (as indeed it was), and then begin to think about the economic and political conditions of the workers who made it, and then am moved to write a letter to my congressional representative protesting the continuance of most-favored-nation trade status for China in light of its atrocious disregard of human rights, and so on, my attention to my coffee mug might actually cause an even larger disorder. The more "unconditional" and "smoother" the appearance of the thing, the more readily it disappears into our use of it. The less we pay attention to particular things *qua* things, the more efficiently we carry on with the tasks we have inherited from the social practices that have constituted us.[9] An impetus to ordering for the sake of ordering—Heidegger's characterization of the essence of technology—will seek to efface anything that impedes such ordering. Thus it will seek to produce things that efface their own conditions of production. No wonder things like coffee mugs and television sets are so anonymous and interchangeable.

Thus it is also no wonder that our life—the life of end-of-century, Western intellectuals—is a life of normal nihilism. Such a devaluation of everything, even of the highest values that direct our lives as steady and efficient technocrats, is an inevitable consequence of our recognizing—perhaps only intermittently, of course—that the things that presence before us (including those cherished "highest values" of ours) are no more and no less than *Bestand.* To see ourselves as ordered by ordering to order things for the sake of ordering—late Heidegger's gloss on seeing ourselves as "social practices all the way down," which was itself a gloss on Nietzsche's claim that we are all finally "will to power"—is to see ourselves as something less impressive than we might have thought. The customary *Pathos* of our things and practices must be compromised by our awareness of their technological character.

9. The connection to what he says in *BT* about *Zeug* is obvious.

But why should the recognition of all our things as *Bestand* lead to their (and our) devaluation? Why should we not be able happily to accept that account of their Being? Conceived in late Heideggerian terms, our mood of normal nihilism originates in the conflict between (1) the apparent unconditionality of our things as they function within our ordinary practices of ordering and (2) the particular conditionality they exhibit when revealed by philosophical reflection as *Bestand.* Caught up in our everyday world of technological practices, and availing ourselves of the "standing-reserve" of things we bring to presence and use within those practices, we proceed as if our lives were unconditional. Neither our practices nor our things announce themselves as dependent for their Being on the marriage of several contingencies, both material and conceptual. My successful employment of my toothbrush or my television set requires that, to some extent or other, I be able to forget about them and the "frames" that make them what they are. My ability to give myself over fully to the practices within which they function depends upon my ability to see through my implements, and therefore finally to see through the practices themselves. To be *in* the practices; not to reflect upon them: that is the mark of their full pathos for us. We—we technocrats—value above all else that sort of unimpeded access to our continuing activity of ordering for the sake of ordering. The full pathos of our practices is in their ability to consume us, to obliterate any hint of their conditionality, to take us up into them without remainder: to make *us* an orderly part of our ordering.

This obliteration of contingency is never—or not yet—complete, however. Not only do accidents happen (e.g., the broken hammer of *Being and Time*), there yet survive other practices alongside our ordinary technological ones. These practices—Heidegger's deliberately recalcitrant philosophical writing is itself a good example—remind us, not only of their own conditionality, but of the conditionality of everything else as well. Once Heidegger has reminded us that a toothbrush (or an academic essay) is *Bestand,* some of its transparency is clouded. It obtrudes itself upon our notice in a way it heretofore did not. This phenomenon of obtrusion becomes even more marked the higher one goes in one's progress of self-reflection. When one turns one's attention to the values, not just to the specific material implements, that presence within one's practices as *Bestand,* the recognition of their conditionality is of quite powerful moment. The new visibility of those values *as values,* that is, as a "standing-reserve" of higher-order implements of interpretation employed for the sake of ordering, renders them less fully available to our efficient use of them. The more atten-

tion we have to give to our structures of interpretation, the less are we given over to our activity of interpretation itself. As the technological activity itself becomes the visible object of our attention, and thus comes to be seen *as* such technological activity, the *Pathos*—the impressiveness, the power—of that activity is diminished.[10]

So it is—thus far, at least—that the dominion of technology is not complete. As yet we still are sometimes made aware of the conditionality of our lives; in particular, we are still, even if dimly, aware of the character of most of our things (including our values) as *Bestand.* And with that awareness, which of course may show itself more in our everyday unreflective comportment to things rather than in any explicit assertions, comes that mood of nagging loss and incompletion—the loss of power—I have been calling normal nihilism. It isn't merely the recognition of contingency or conditionality that produces such enervation; it is that recognition occurring within a life that in its dominant practices must deny it. Normal nihilism is thus (to use a Nietzschean image for it) "the ghost at the feast": the return of the repressed, a return that disconcerts the practices, and thus the persons, that repressed it. Normal nihilism is in that way a symptom, a distressing indication of our (typically hidden) normal existence as orderly, ordering technological beings. If we were to respond to it thoughtfully, our symptomatic distress could be the first step in a cure. That is why Heidegger can say, in Hölderlin's voice: "But where the danger is, grows / The saving power also" ("QT," 28). But a painful symptom can call up another, and much more dangerous sort of response. It may provoke the sufferer merely to suppress the occasion of the suffering, rather than to eliminate its cause. The danger of our normal nihilism—a danger embodied either as unbridled addiction to

10. By speaking in this paragraph (and in other places in this chapter) of what "one" does or what "we" do, I make it sound as if we were discrete selves who willfully associate ourselves with various social practices and who take up particular psychological attitudes (e.g., despair, boredom, joy) to our lives. From Heidegger's point of view, of course, such quasi-Cartesian locutions are merely shorthand ways of talking about the particular elaborations—linguistic and otherwise—of the particular social practices constituting some form of human life. We are, he believes, "social practices all the way down"; there are no Cartesian or Husserlian egos to adopt particular practices or to have particular attitudes toward them. Thus the "loss of pathos" defining our mood of normal nihilism is not an ego's "psychological attitude" to its life. Rather, it is a public mood, understood as a particular linguistic or behavioral elaboration of a practice (or set of practices), an elaboration that to some extent clogs the smooth flow of that practice in its attempt to efficiently order things for the sake of ordering. For ease of composition and comprehension I shall sometimes use the familiar quasi-Cartesian linguistic forms, but the reader should at every such point be able to substitute the Heideggerian translations of them.

novelty or as total submission to the normal—is the danger that our need to suppress the disorder consequent upon the recognition of contingency will rebound with redoubled force upon our things and upon ourselves, that one way or another we shall be able to remove all barriers to the efficient ordering of things for the sake of ordering; that there will be no life for us outside the mall.

Gathering the Fourfold

Having described *die Technik* as its nihilistic alternative, it is now time to return to the description of the kind of life Heidegger calls "poetic dwelling on the earth as a mortal." In "Building Dwelling Thinking" Heidegger unambiguously identifies *dwelling* as the basic form of human life: "The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth, is *Buan,* dwelling. To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell" ("BDT," 147).

By calling to mind here the Old High German word *buan* (which originally meant "to remain, to stay in a place") Heidegger is trying to forge a link between dwelling and the modern German word *Bauen,* which means "to build." Dwelling is building; building is dwelling. To be a human being "is always a staying with things" ("BDT," 151); the *things* one has *built* through one's *dwelling.* To be a human being is to bring things to presence before oneself and others, either through practices of cultivation (Latin: colere, cultura) or through practices of construction (Latin: aedificare). Dwelling is, therefore, always building things. Yes, but what are the things that human dwelling builds? In those practices we have been calling technological ones, the things brought to presence before us are there as *Bestand,* as the "standing-reserve" that awaits and makes possible our ordering for the sake of ordering. Heidegger is groping for a different notion of the thing, a notion that—in his typically mythical way—he thinks of as older and truer. In "The Thing" he focuses our attention on a simple earthen jug, presumably the kind of thing one might have found on any Black Forest farmstead a couple of centuries ago, and thus presumably also a thing (largely) uncorrupted by *die Technik.* What does it mean, he asks, to say that such a jug is a *thing?*

As is typical for Heidegger, he finds a key in the history of the word.[11]

11. The Heideggerian reliance on etymology one sees here is itself typically mythical:

In his account, the Old High German word for "thing" (*dinc*) means a gathering, "and specifically a gathering to deliberate on a matter under discussion, a contested matter" ("T," 174). From this (alleged) etymological insight he draws the conclusion that the thing is something that *gathers:* "This manifold-simple gathering is the jug's presencing. Our language denotes what a gathering *is* by an ancient word. That word is: thing" ("T," 174).

At first glance, this emphasis on gathering seems just a florid way of calling attention to the sort of meaning-holism we saw so clearly in *Being and Time.* Just as "there 'is' no such thing as an equipment" (*BT,* 97), there 'is' no such thing as a thing. Just as any one piece of Dasein's gear necessarily "refers to" other pieces of that gear (a *pen* is to be filled with *ink* for writing on *paper,* and so forth), so it is that any thing (such as a jug) is the thing it is only insofar as it presences in a social practice alongside other things (such as wine, plates, bread, cups, and so forth). A thing always "gathers" the other things that belong together with it. Its Being—its significance, its meaning, its sense—is always given in relation to those other things, just as their Being is always given in relation to it. But by calling a thing something that gathers, Heidegger has in mind more than this simple meaning-holism borrowed from *Being and Time.* A thing does not merely gather other things; *a thing gathers the fourfold* ("BDT," 153). Here are some crucial passages:

> *The fundamental character of dwelling is . . . sparing and preserving.* It pervades dwelling in its whole range. That whole range reveals itself to us as soon as we reflect that human being consists in dwelling and, indeed, dwelling in the sense of the stay of mortals on the earth.
>
> But "on the earth" already means "under the sky." Both of these *also* mean "remaining before the divinities" and include "belonging to men's being with one another." By a *primal* oneness the four—earth and sky, divinities and mortals—belong together in one.

it depends on the mythical idea that each of the "elemental words" had some pure and distinct meaning (a meaning from the Golden Age before we knew philosophical sin) and that saving remnants of that original meaning are retained in the great philosophical languages like German and Greek, where they can be unearthed by insightful Heideggerian etymology. As I have said, it is possible and (I think) desirable to separate Heidegger's insights from their mythical wrappings.

> This simple oneness of the four we call *the fourfold.* Mortals *are* in the fourfold by *dwelling.* But the character of dwelling is to spare, to preserve. Mortals dwell in the way they preserve the fourfold in its essential being, its presencing. Accordingly, the preserving that dwells is fourfold.
>
> Dwelling preserves the fourfold by bringing the presencing of the fourfold into things. But things themselves secure the fourfold *only when* they themselves *as* things are let be in their presencing. ("BDT," 149, 150, 151)

Think of the fourfold as the intersection of two axes. At the head of each of the four semi-axes is one of "the four": earth, sky, mortals, divinities. One axis is formed at either end by earth and sky; the other is formed at either end by divinities and mortals. At the center, at the intersection of the axes, is *the thing.*

What does Heidegger intend "the four" to be? His description of them is typically overblown and cryptic.

> Earth is the serving bearer, blossoming and fruiting, spreading out in rock and water, rising up into plant and animal. . . . The sky is the vaulting path of the sun, the course of the changing moon, the wandering glitter of the stars, the year's seasons and their changes, the light and dusk of day, the gloom and glow of night, the clemency and inclemency of the weather, the drifting clouds and blue depth of the ether. . . . The divinities are the beckoning messengers of the godhead. Out of the holy sway of the godhead, the god appears in his presence or withdraws into his concealment. . . . The mortals are the human beings. They are called mortals because they can die. ("BDT," 149f.)

Each of the four is, I think, intended to put us in mind of some one of the particular conditions that make possible ("grant") the life that brought to presence the actual thing before us; each of the four is what one might call a particular *dimension* of that conditionality.[12]

12. It will be clear to the philosophical reader that here I am reading Heidegger as a transcendental philosopher in the tradition of Kant, the father of all those thinkers who conceive the philosopher as calling attention to the necessary conditions for the possibility of various phenomena. (In this way Kant is the first philosopher to have thematized *indebtedness* as the fundamental philosophical category.) Heidegger is Kantian as well in his insistence, discussed below, that the conditions discovered by philo-

Conditionality is indebtedness. The conditions of a life, and thus the conditions of the particular things—poems, jugs, antibiotics—which that life brings forth, are what make that life (and those things) possible as such. Any actual and determinate life is possible only in virtue of something not itself, something "prior" (both temporally and logically), to which that life, and all its good and ills, is indebted. To live, therefore, is to owe one's life; to be human is to be always already in debt. The point may seem banal, but in our ordinary technological practices of production every effort is made to obscure those conditions, and thus our indebtedness. The coffee mug, the toothbrush, the television set—all these present to us a smooth and untroubled surface; they offer no impediment to our use of them. In that use they easily and helpfully disappear without calling any attention to themselves and to the life of which they are expressions. It is as if these things appear before us without human intervention at all: when things are going well in their use, there are certainly no indications of the presence of the particular human beings who made them and for whom they were made. Here is a homely example to illustrate the point. Last night there was a television news story about stubbornly harsh economic conditions in southern California; the story featured a couple of manufacturing plants that were considering leaving the state in search of cheaper labor, lower taxes, and less stringent regulation. One of these businesses made suitcases of a kind I happen to own, and I was shocked to see from the videotape that much of the assembly of the product is done by hand. I was taken aback as I saw my suitcase being put together—somewhat awkwardly, and at no small expense of energy—by a middle-aged woman in a sort of mobcap, wielding a large and apparently heavy high-speed drill. Nothing in the suitcase itself, so sleek and high-tech in its appearance, gives any indication of that woman or of her effort: buying and using my suitcase, I had not thought of her at all.[13] Nothing gives any indication of the materials—in every sense of the term—out of which it is made, and to which it is indebted. It is as if the suitcase appeared in the luggage-shop by magic: from nowhere in particular; for the use of

sophical reflection are ultimately ahistorical. In his view, *the fourfold* names dimensions of indebtedness common to every human life in every time and place.

13. And from Heidegger's point of view, it would be a mistake to moralize that failure, that is, to blame it on my own insensitivity or carelessness. The obscurity of the conditions of the suitcase (the woman and her effort among them) is rooted in the suitcase itself, in its sleek surfaces and in the practices of travel in which it is incorporated; not (only) in the blindness of its user.

no-one in particular. It appears to our use unconditionally so that it can disappear in that use completely. It is *Bestand.*

By contrast, each of "the four" calls our attention to a specific condition of the life that produced the thing presencing there before us. To call attention to the *earth,* to start with that dimension of the fourfold, is to call attention to the thing as conditioned by that which is ultimately "material," that is, by that which is finally beyond our power to make or to name. Earth is the stuff out of which a thing is made. At a first pass, one may think of that "material" as something concrete and namable, like ore or soil or bark; but those "raw materials" (as we end-of-century technocrats like to call them) are instances of something more abstract and original. Earth is not simply that which is (in our sense) "physical"; it is Heidegger's way of talking about that which is *an sich.* To speak of the Earth is to speak of the *substance* of things. Earth is the dark *physis,* that which rises up out of itself to confront us with its brute reality; it is that mystery which challenges us to respond to it by trying to draw it out into the light of our common understanding. Earth is that condition of human life that confronts us with the adamant "thereness" of certain unnamable but unignorable powers. It is a grasp out of the darkness; a seizing that shakes us into awareness of itself, demanding to be named. But earth has no final name. To speak of the earth is to be reminded of that always unilluminated darkness from which arises whatever we can see and thus learn to give words to. But to speak of the earth is also to speak of the "serving bearer." It is to recognize that the dark mystery of those powers that can never be finally named is also that out of which all that we make is made. If there were no darkness that surges and rises out of itself, no earth, then there would be nothing to emerge into the light of our conceptions, nothing to demand that light, however flickering. Our life of enlightened things is sheltered by that darkness.

Any life is a life lived "on the earth." Any life is, first of all, a life the illuminating conceptions of which are always conceptions of something that transcends those conceptions even as it makes them possible. The steady and reliable illuminations furnished by our constitutive linguistic and behavioral practices are always the lighting-up of something "in itself" dark, in the sense that in one way or another in its brute "materiality" it will challenge and defeat our attempts to constrain it only to our enlightened uses. Sooner or later the ceramic coffee mug will decisively "assert its materiality"; sooner or later it will, perhaps through breakage or prolonged disuse, withdraw from the shadowless light of our thoughtless use of it into the darkness of

its brute "stuff." It will fall out of our practices and become nothing at all. Or, to use a different sort of example, consider a painting that emerges from a host of academic daubs to challenge the scholastic artworld certainties of its time. The painting's mystery, its power to affect us and to render void all our previous assumptions of what a painting might be, its demand that we find a new name for what it is and what it aspires to—all that is an exhibition of the earth from which that painting has been quarried. And here the mug or the painting are just images for a condition of *all* intelligibility: that which is now intelligible was not so, at some point, and at some point will not be so again. Before there was a world of illuminated things, there was the earth; and after this (or any) world of particular things, particular practices, has passed away, the "earth" will remain. In Heidegger's idiom, *earth* is a metaphor for the dark and unnamable substance of all things. And that substance, dark as it is, is the necessary condition of any thing that is.

But a life lived "on the earth" is also a life lived "under the sky." In Heidegger's usage, the metaphor has two resonances. First, the sky is the source of light; it is only "under the sky" and its varying degrees of luminance that anything can be seen as the thing it is. In this way, to speak of the sky is to speak of those ongoing social practices—in full flower or in decline; bright as day or dim as the dusk—within which things come to presence as the things they are. A pen is a pen only because (along with ink, paper, desks, teachers, and so forth) it is a part of a coherent and ramified set of social practices that involve it in writing. It is those writing-practices that "grant" the pen its Being as a pen; it is only in the light of those writing-practices that the pen can be seen for—can BE—what it is. Out of the "darkness" of earth, something—some particular (kind of) thing—proceeds into the "light" of our common understanding and use. In this way, a thing is the thing it is "under the sky" of those illuminating linguistic and behavioral practices that constitute us and our common world. Those practices, whatever they are, are the conditions for whatever presences within their shelter.

But to speak of the sky is to speak of more that just those practices that light up things. The sky is "the vaulting path of the sun, the course of the changing moon," and thus to speak of the sky is Heidegger's way of talking about the fit (or, more likely, the lack of fit) of the human and its purposes into the inhuman and its impersonal cycles and necessities. Our constitutive social practices—patterns of normalized and normalizing behaviors—are not the only regularities that appear to our reflection. Our projected rounds and congruencies

are conditioned on patterns we can come to see are prior to them. Our lives, we might say (using an effective nominalization), always already answer to Nature. Under the spell of technology, human beings take themselves to be the center and the point of all things; there is little awareness, and even less overt acknowledgment, that our activities and projects are set within—and must ultimately accommodate themselves to—the inhuman, uncaring cycles of the "natural" world. The *Bestand* of technology appears to offer itself up to our use, and thus to offer *us* up to our technological practices, without reference to anything beyond ourselves. Our sky—our horizon—becomes *the* sky.

Again an example can serve as an image for Heidegger's philosophical point. Consider the normal way an American suburb is developed. The land is plotted and shaped so that maximum economic value can be realized in its sale—roads are laid out and paved, flows of water are diverted or enclosed, trees are cut down or planted, and so forth—and then houses are built on the lots that have been divided and sold. In a typical suburb, there may be no attention paid either to the natural features of the countryside being developed or to the climate—physical or cultural—within which the house will live. For example, the houses will typically not be designed or sited so as to take maximum advantage of the path of the sun in winter and summer; likewise the roads will be graded to facilitate ease of traffic flow (or to ensure an economically valuable personal privacy), not in accordance with the natural occurrence of rocks, streams, or trees. The style of the houses—New England saltbox, Old South mansion, Tuscan villa, Swiss chalet—will be determined by the whim (and the pocketbook) of the builder or by the "design concept" of the developer, rather than by the climate or the land. What matter that the summer sun floods the living room: just add more capacity to the air conditioner. What matter that this is a pencil-pine forest in Piedmont, South Carolina: if you want a French château, you can get it. Such houses forget, or perhaps actually deny, that they live "under the sky," and so do the people who live in them. That is, such houses are designed and built so as to conceal the conditions of both their building and their occupancy. They deliberately reflect neither the culture out of which they come nor the climate within which they will be used. Such things as these conceal the ways that the inhuman with its inflexible demands is prior to—is a granting condition of—the human with its temporary projects.

So the first axis on which the thing is situated is the axis formed by earth and sky: the thing is set "on the earth" and "under the sky." The second axis also reveals conditions of the life that produced the thing;

it is the axis formed by the divinities and the mortals. The divinities, says Heidegger, are "the beckoning messengers of the godhead." They are presences from another world, annunciators of a place of haleness and wholeness. The divinities are the reality both of human need for such weal and of our hope that it will someday be vouchsafed to us. "Mortals dwell in that they await the divinities as divinities. In hope they hold up to the divinities what is unhoped for" ("BDT," 150). Need and eschatological hope are (according to Heidegger) *conditions* of human life. To recognize one's fundamental neediness, to acknowledge that one is not the healthy and complete being one can imagine—if only inchoately—oneself to be, to look to the future for the gift of one's completion brought on the wings of a presence from another world—these are not just psychological tics or cultural quirks. They are, according to Heidegger, part of the matter of what it is to be us.

The things produced by technology conceal both the need and the hope. By holding out the promise of transparent availability to our current projects, and even more by frequently making good on that promise, these things hide from us our irremediable lack of wholeness; they also obscure the need to look forward to the apocalyptic future in readiness for the advent of the presence that will heal us. By making themselves and their practices invisible in our active immersion in them, our everyday things expertly fold us into the present they create, or into the future seamlessly extrapolated from that present. And by successfully meeting needs they have themselves largely created, they blind us to our need for something radically new and whole.

In spite of using the trope of theological language, it is clear that Heidegger is not identifying the divinities with the personified supernatural presences of vulgar religious belief. His presences from another world may be poems, paintings, works of philosophy, revolutionary political practices, new vocabularies of self-description: in short, whatever holds the promise of our healing self-transformation. To "await the divinities" is to solicit from the future—presumably by living a certain way here and now—the advent of some new "god" and its dispensation. And to live with this sort of attitude toward the future is at the same time to live in past and present in a particular fashion. Present and past are both wrapped up in one's eschatological hope. The apocalyptic future, though impossible to force, must be prepared for; and present and past are the story in which the traces of the god—traces both of absence and of coming presence—must be discerned: "The turning of the age does not take place by some new god, or the old one renewed, bursting into the world from ambush at

some time or other. Where would he turn on his return if men had not first prepared an abode for him? How could there ever be for the god an abode fit for a god, if a divine radiance did not first begin to shine in everything that is?"[14]

The second constituent of the second axis is the mortals. "The mortals are the human beings. They are called mortals because they can die. To die means to be capable of death *as* death" ("BDT," 150). Everything at some point ceases to exist, but only human beings die. Only human beings live in awareness of their inevitable end: that is to be capable of death *as* death. "Mortals dwell in that they initiate their own nature—their being capable of death as death—into the use and practice of this capacity, so that there may be a good death" ("BDT," 151). Death is not an accident of human life; it is its very condition. The presence of death—of insuperable limitation, of our world's contingency, of inevitable failure at the last—is what makes a human life distinctively human: "Only man dies, and indeed continually, as long as he remains on earth, under the sky, before the divinities" ("BDT," 150). To be a human being is to be mortal and, in some way or another, to acknowledge (even if only by frantic denial) that mortality. To dwell is to dwell as a mortal, and to dwell is to build; so the things one builds are things that—either by way of fullness or by way of privation—show the conditions of the dwelling that produced them. Death is Heidegger's trope in this essay for conditionality itself. To know oneself to be mortal is not (merely) to know that one will oneself die; it is to know that all one knows and most cares about—*everything:* every thing—is contingent upon a constellation of circumstances that will someday no longer hold together. To acknowledge one's mortality is to acknowledge that abyss over which everything precariously juts, which is the abyss of pure, pointless time: time which is not history. Most of the things brought to light by our ordinary technological practices do not show the condition of our mortality in that sense. They are not things that acknowledge "death *as* death." Quite the opposite: things like my coffee mug and my television set conceal not just their ends but my own. With their ready availability and their featureless surfaces, they ease me into my everyday practices; in the normal case they offer me no friction, no im-

14. Martin Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?" (hereafter cited as "WPF" followed by a page number). The essay can be found in Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought.* There is here, as in many places in Heidegger, an unwholesome political resonance, a yearning to be ravished by some new and powerful presence, one that does not answer to anything but itself. I do not think Heidegger's work is vitiated by such ugly and antidemocratic resonances, real as they are.

pediment, nothing to remind me of my incapacities and of my final inability to sustain myself. These days even the things intimately concerned with the fact of our physical death obscure what they serve: a contemporary coffin has the metallic sheen and boxy strength of a Lexus; in neither thing is there any intimation of the junkyard crusher or of the inevitable depredations of adipocere. The conditions of the life that produced the thing are covered over in the thing itself.

Measuring Oneself Against the Godhead

To dwell is to build, to build is to build things, and things gather the fourfold. All human life is, one way or another, a dwelling and a building life, even the kind of life Heidegger calls technology. But the practices of technology produce things that only privatively gather the fourfold. The things of technology are things that (largely successfully) cover over the most general conditions of the life out of which they come.

As a paradigmatic alternative to the things of technology, Heidegger offers the Black Forest farmhouse:

> Let us think for a while of a farmhouse in the Black Forest, which was built some two hundred years ago by the dwelling of peasants. Here the self-sufficiency of the power to let earth and heaven, divinities and mortals enter *in simple oneness* into things, ordered the house. It placed the farm on the wind-sheltered mountain slope looking south, among the meadows close to the spring. It gave it the wide overhanging shingle roof whose proper slope bears up under the burden of snow, and which, reaching deep down, shields the chambers against the storms of the long winter nights. It did not forget the altar corner behind the community table; it made room in its chamber for the hallowed places of childbed and the "tree of the dead"—for that is what they call a coffin there: the *Totenbaum*—and in this way it designed for the different generations under one roof the character of their journey through time. A craft which, itself sprung from dwelling, still uses its tools and frames as things, built the farmhouse. ("BDT," 160)

Notice how this house, as a thing, "gathers the fourfold"; that is, makes clear in the thing itself the conditions of the life out of which

the thing comes. The house is set "on the earth" and "under the sky." Its materials—wood and stone that will always bear the physical marks of their working—show the recalcitrance to human purpose of the dark *physis* from which they have been extricated by human labor and to which they will someday return. Its placement in relation to light, wind, and water acknowledges both the "bright sky" of the practices (of farming, of cooking, of childrearing) within which it comes to presence and the priority of the inhuman cycles of the seasons and of pure bodily need to any plans and projects we may voluntarily undertake. The presence of childbed and coffin corner are reminders of the specifically temporal character of human existence, and in particular of the death that awaits us all. The altar with its crucifix is a way of showing the openness to the future as the site of apocalyptic transformation for which the family hungers; it symbolizes the way in which the divinities, as messengers from another world to come, are always already being made present in our waiting for them. And notice how this house, as a thing, gathers all the conditions of its life "in simple oneness." No one of the features we have mentioned is an *ornament* (as they would be, if one were to imagine this house transported bodily to an end-of-century American suburb). All these features of the thing play off one another in an organic whole. The life within which the house comes to presence contains all four dimensions of our condition, and acknowledges both them and their necessary interpenetration. The thing exists at the intersection of the two axes, and none of "the four" is separable from the others. "The united four are already strangled in their essential nature when we think of them only as separate realities, which are to be grounded in and explained by one another" ("T," 180). That is, these conditions—the conditions that make the thing the thing it is—are not themselves *things*. They are not *super*things that "ground" the Being of the things there are. In this way the fourfold is in no way metaphysical; it escapes the Platonic paradigm, in which the Being of beings is itself identified as a being. The fourfold cannot be presenced as such. It is the "dimension" within which all presencing happens.

So the dwelling life is a life that brings to presence things that carry on their faces the conditions—both particular conditions and the overall conditionality—of the life out of which they come. All human lives are lives of dwelling, but not all such lives dwell *fully*. Not all our practices are practices that bring forth things that are radiant with the conditions of the life that brought them into being. (Technological practices do not.) Those practices that do, Heidegger calls *poetic* dwelling, taking the phrase from some lines by Hölderlin.

Full of merit, yet poetically, man
Dwells on this earth.[15]

"Making is, in Greek, *poiesis*" ("PMD," 214). And the making talked about in that word is different from the kind of making that produces the *Bestand* of technology.

> This producing that brings forth [namely, *poiesis*], e.g., erecting a statue in the temple precinct, and the ordering that challenges [*die Technik*] . . . are indeed fundamentally different, and yet they remain related in their essence. Both are ways of revealing, of *aletheia*. ("QT," 21)

Both *poiesis* and technology are ways of bringing things forth into presence, but the things they bring forth are very different. The things brought forth by the practices of technology are *Bestand;* but the things built by the practices of poetic dwelling "gather the fourfold." They make explicit the holistic concatenation (the "appropriating mirror-play" ["T," 179]) of the fundamental conditions of the life that produced them. In this way, and since both *die Technik* and *poiesis* belong to the realm of *aletheia,* one can say that the things and practices of poetic dwelling are truer than the things and practices of technology. These things and practices reveal more; they conceal less. In particular, and most important, they tell the truth about us as the conditional beings we are: "Thinking in this way, we are called by the thing as the thing. In the strict sense of the German word *bedingt,* we are the be-thinged, the conditioned ones. We have left behind us the presupposition of all unconditionedness" ("T," 181).

"We have left behind us the presupposition of all unconditionedness." One might say: to live in practices that bring forth things that gather the fourfold is to acknowledge one's *autochthony.* It is to have given up the illusion of oneself as a radically individual center of pure self-awareness, or pure will, that floats free of any particular history. By acknowledging that one is "be-thinged," one has acknowledged that one is not the transcendental subject held forth by the Western philosophical tradition since Descartes. And yet one is not merely the *Zeug*-using Dasein of *Being and Time,* either. One is a builder of things; one is, in the deepest sense, a poet. By *letting things be* one is cooperating with the earth in the bringing forth of *truthful* things, things that bear on themselves the marks of what brought them forth. In this way, one is living, we might say, a truthful life. One is

15. The provenance of the poem is given in "PMD," 213.

living a life true to its own autochthonous conditions, a truth bodied forth in the things it brings to presence. Such a life is the life of poetic dwelling:

> When Hölderlin speaks of dwelling, he has before his eyes the basic character of human existence. He sees the "poetic," moreover, by way of relation to this dwelling, thus understood essentially.
>
> Poetry is what really lets us dwell. But through what do we attain to a dwelling place? Through building. Poetic creation, which lets us dwell, is a kind of building. ("PMD," 215)

But there is one more important element in poetic dwelling we have not yet touched on. It is what Heidegger calls *measuring oneself against the godhead,* and here too he relies on some lines of Hölderlin's poem as the source of his imagery:

As long as Kindness,
The Pure, still stays with his heart, man
Not unhappily measures himself
Against the godhead. Is God unknown?
Is he manifest like the sky? I'd sooner
Believe the latter. It's the measure of man.
("PMD," 219)

Heidegger believes that fully poetic dwelling must include this reference to "the godhead," a reference that apparently moves one some distance past making things that gather the fourfold: "Only insofar as man takes the measure of his dwelling in this way [namely, by measuring himself against the godhead] is he able to *be* commensurately with his nature. Man's dwelling depends on an upward-looking measure-taking of the dimension, in which the sky belongs just as much as the earth" ("PMD," 221). Naturally, this "measuring" takes place through the poetic bringing forth of things: "The taking of measure is what is poetic in dwelling. Poetry is a measuring" ("PMD," 221).

What is at issue here? We must first be clear that the godhead is not, in spite of the supernatural imagery Heidegger uses, a notion that properly belongs to theology. To speak of "God" or "the godhead" is not to speak of Yahweh, Allah, or some other mythical divine being. We must also be clear that Heidegger is trying hard to keep the notion free of any distinctively philosophical inflection; he does not want

it to become a concept within a metaphysical representation of what there is. Heidegger wants his words here—"the godhead," "the sky"—to have a resonance beyond our familiar structures of "ontotheology." He wants them to belong to that unprecedented sort of *thinking* (as he calls it) that will succeed Western philosophy at its end, a thinking that will give attention to just what all such philosophy from its beginning has concealed.[16] Thus it will not be easy for us to follow him confidently. A beginning may be made, however, by returning to the notion that the thing "gathers the fourfold." I have glossed that as saying that some linguistic and behavioral practices (e.g., the farming life of Black Forest peasants in the eighteenth century) bring into presence things (e.g., their houses) that themselves call attention to the most general conditions of their presencing; and the fourfold is Heidegger's imagery for those conditions attendant (he believes) on any human life. (We shall return to the question of whether such a claim on Heidegger's part is insufficiently historicist.) In this way these things make it possible for us to give attention to the things themselves, and thus to ourselves too, as autochthonous beings, as always already conditional (*bedingt*). Is that as far as such revelation—such truthful making of things—can go? No, thinks Heidegger, since there is also (what one might call) the *meta*condition of the presencing of any conditional thing. That metacondition is what he tropes as *die Lichtung*—the clearing, the lighting—and it is that metacondition he is imaging in his references to the godhead against which we measure ourselves.

The notion of the clearing is a central theme of Heidegger's essay "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," first published in 1966. The central ambition of that essay is to gesture at a kind of thinking that goes decisively beyond the *vorstellendes Denken* (representational thinking) characteristic of all metaphysics, and thus of all philosophy. "What characterizes metaphysical thinking which grounds the ground for beings is the fact that metaphysical thinking, starting from what is present, represents it in its presence and thus exhibits it as grounded by its ground" ("EP," 374). From that very rich sentence let us extract only a couple of points. First, metaphysical philosophy starts from what is present. It begins its speculation from the things ("beings") already brought to presence in our sight and in our use. It asks: how did those things come to be—to Be—the things they are?

16. Martin Heidegger, "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," trans. Joan Stambaugh, reprinted in Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*. The essay will be cited by "EP," followed by the page number of *Basic Writings*.

Second, in asking its question about the Being of things, metaphysical philosophy is asking the question of Being by asking for the *ground* of those present things. That is, in asking about (in the widest sense) the determining conditions of the things that are present, Western philosophy always seeks to uncover those conditions as *themselves something present.* Metaphysical philosophy—nourished by its Platonic root—always seeks to explain the Being of beings by reference to some "higher" being, a *ground,* an avatar of the Form. Thus representational thinking (the kind of thinking definitive for all philosophy) is the kind of thinking that tries to presence the determining conditions of all presencing; it tries to represent (i.e., re-present; present as another present being) what makes any determinate representation possible.

As an example of what is at stake here, think of a simple and familiar Gestalt image, such as the one that can be seen either as a large urn or as two faces in profile staring at one another. Which way the image gets seen depends on which color gets seen as the figure and which gets seen as the ground. (It's either a white urn seen against a black ground or two black faces seen against a white ground.) Notice that it is a condition of any determinate figure's being seen at all that something furnish a ground for that figure. To try to presence that ground as *itself* a determinate figure (which in the case of this ambiguous image one can certainly do) is necessarily to make something else the ground: it is impossible to presence both colors as figure at exactly the same moment. Yet that is just the sort of thing metaphysical philosophy tries to do. In asking about Being as the ground of beings, and in trying to represent that ground as something itself directly representable, it is trying to presence, as something fully present, the conditions of all presencing. It is trying to turn the conditions of what beings there are into *itself* a being. In this way metaphysical philosophy is obscuring the "ontological difference," the difference between Being and beings. Questions about how meaning happens—about Being—cannot be answered by exhibiting things ("beings") that always already possess some meaning. Questions about ultimate conditions cannot be answered by exhibiting something that is always already conditioned by those very conditions.

Heidegger is trying for a kind of thinking that attends in a different way to the conditions of things. Part of that thinking we have already seen in his discussion of making things that "gather the fourfold," but the conditions imaged there as "the four" are not the, so to speak, *final* condition of the things brought to presence. Each of the four is still tied closely to the *human;* these are images for the most general

conditions of human life, whatever its particular cultural forms, whether fifth-century Athenian or eighteenth-century Swabian. They are deliberately antiphilosophical images for "the basic features of human existence," features that can be visibly present in the things (e.g., the Black Forest farmhouse) brought forth within a life of fully poetic dwelling, and features that can be deliberately concealed in the things (e.g., the ceramic coffee mug) produced by technology. But there is, one might say, a further level of conditionality, the metacondition of human dwelling/building/thinking. (One might call it the conditioning condition of conditionality itself.) It is the condition of presencing in terms of which our human presencing of things like farmhouses and coffee mugs is but a particular instance. That is what Heidegger calls *die Lichtung.*

> But what remains unthought in the matter of philosophy as well as in its method? Speculative dialectic is a mode in which the matter of philosophy comes to appear of itself and for itself, and thus becomes present. Such appearance necessarily occurs in some light [*Licht*]. Only by virtue of light, i.e., through brightness, can what shines show itself, that is, radiate. But brightness in its turn rests upon something open, something free, which it might illuminate here and there, now and then. Brightness plays in the open and wars there with darkness.
>
> We call this openness that grants a possible letting-appear and show "opening" [*die Lichtung*].
>
> Light can stream into the clearing, into its openness, and let brightness play with darkness in it. But light never first creates openness. Rather, light presupposes openness [*Lichtung*]. . . . The clearing [*die Lichtung*] is the open region for everything that becomes present and absent. ("EP," 384–85; translation slightly altered)

It is difficult to say plainly what Heidegger is trying to get at here. He is trying to think about how it happens that anything, and especially something genuinely new, comes to pass. Why is there something—some new thing, something radiant with new Being—rather than blank nothing or humdrum sameness? How does Being (meaning, significance, sense) originate? And that is to ask not only how does this specific thing come to have the specific Being it has (a question that might be answered by an intellectual historian describing

various human practices and their vicissitudes); it is also to ask after the ultimate condition of Being itself. How does anything come to be? That is the question (the one he called *die Seinsfrage*) Heidegger was asking in *Being and Time;* but he stopped too soon, with the determining condition of Dasein's "concernful dealings." He did not ask where *those* "came from." Nor did he ask about the source of the light he believed *Being and Time* itself to shed on those conditions. After the "turn," Heidegger is trying to give attention to the fundamental condition of *all* presence and originality, including his own: whence comes the new word, the new philosophical vocabulary, the new god, the new form of life, the new politics, the new artwork? What is the ultimate "ground" upon which any genuinely new "figure" appears? Whence come the words that allow us to ask these very questions—and then to begin to answer them with such words as "conditionality" and "the fourfold"? And he is trying to think about this matter in a way that does not fall into metaphysics. He is trying not to identify the "ground" of what comes unexpectedly to be present with anything that can be represented as *itself* some sort of presence (namely, as a ground in the sense typical to philosophy). He does not want to forget, as Western philosophy has, the "ontological difference" between Being and beings.

The image of the clearing is his way of attending to the unpresenceable final condition of any presence and its specific conditions. Think, as the German word *Lichtung* happily encourages, of a bright and open space in the evergreen forest. Into that clearing the light pours, and in that gathered light one can see emerge the animals and plants that are at home there. "But light never first creates openness. Rather, light presupposes openness." Without the light there could be no seeing, but without first the clearing there could be no confluence of light to make that seeing possible. And now think of that clearing as an event rather than as an enduring feature of the landscape; hear the word "clearing" as a gerund rather than as a noun. In that clearing-event whatever appears, appears. The clearing (clear-*ing*) gathers the light in virtue of which whatever is seen—the thing—can be seen for what it is.

Certainly it is Freud's vocabulary that lets me see—that lights up—my quirks and pathologies as my Oedipal residues, just as it is Rorty's vocabulary that lets me see Freud as the maker of an extraordinary vocabulary. These folks are the light-bringers, the ones we—rightly—sing as our heroes. But look closely enough at them and one must throw up one's hands, no matter how powerful the art of the biographer. It's not so much that one can't figure out where the bright

sparks originated: Freud read Sophocles and Schopenhauer and talked to Fliess; Rorty studied Aristotle and Whitehead and Dewey before he read Heidegger and Davidson. No, it's that one can't understand how those scattered sparks actually coalesced into the particular flow of light that now illuminates us and what we see. To begin to think about that confluence, and to realize that no merely causal story (or any other story we can tell) will do to explain it, is to have begun to think about the clearing, albeit still at too concrete a level. Push, now, one's questions about the origins of these particular linguistic and behavioral practices—Freud's psychoanalytic therapy, Rorty's pragmatic readings—to the point of asking about how *any* such gathering of light (including this one: Heidegger's) is possible. Why is there steady illumination at all? Why is there not just darkness, or at best stroboscopic flashes that add up to nothing? (And no Just-So stories about the Big Bang, or Yahweh, or natural selection, or evolutionary epistemology, or "social practices all the way down"—stories which are themselves wonderfully illuminating, of course—can get at *that* question, as they themselves are just instances of the illuminating practices the question is asking about.) One is now asking about the continuous, essential, and mysterious event of the clearing.

Notice further that the event of the clearing is not of human making. The human being is not the self-supporting "subject" upon which all the presencing of things is erected. Even the appearance of the human to itself *as* human is granted within a clearing. The clearing (clear-*ing*) is something necessarily *given* to us; we cannot deliberately create the opening space into which the light of revealing rushes and gathers and holds. To make this point Heidegger again relies on a feature of the German language. Whereas in English we say "There is a book," in German one says "Es gibt [it gives] ein Buch." The presence of the book before us is something *given.* The clearing within which the light pools to show us the book is a clearing granted to us, not a clearing we have made: "But where does the opening come from and how is it given? What speaks in the 'There is/It gives'? ("EP," 392).

The point is not to answer that question. The point is to keep the question open, to live in its light, to forestall any (necessarily) premature answers to it. To speak of *die Lichtung* is not to traffic in an answer to any recognizable inquiry, philosophical or otherwise. Rather, the word is itself just shorthand for the question of what (if anything) speaks in the "There is." But what is the point of a question without an answer? Is the question of *die Lichtung* even a real question at all? Shouldn't we stick to questions of "origin" that can be

answered by physicists or biologists or intellectual historians? Such pragmatic skepticism, which is certainly ours, is just what one should expect, according to Heidegger. It is no wonder that the fundamentally repressed question of our history—"How does Being happen at all?"—doesn't even look to us like a genuine question. Shouldn't we expect that such a question—if there really is one—would at first skirt very close to nonsense?

Die Lichtung is for Heidegger the most fundamental expression of *aletheia,* understood as the event of unconcealing. The clearing is that "place" or "event" (the scare-quotes are intended to mark these words as tropes) within which every particular event of revelation transpires: "The opening grants first of all the possibility of the path to presence, and grants the possible presencing of that presence itself. We must think *aletheia,* unconcealment, as the opening which first grants Being and thinking and their presencing to and for each other. The quiet heart of the opening is the place of stillness from which alone the possibility of the belonging together of Being and thinking, that is, presence and apprehending, can arise at all" ("EP," 387).

But this absolute priority of the clearing (understood as *aletheia*) means that *aletheia* itself is not to be understood as truth. "The natural concept of truth does not mean unconcealment, not in the philosophy of the Greeks either" ("EP," 389f.)[17] Truth may be characterized as (to use Heidegger's words) "the belonging together of Being and thinking," and that concordance can only take place within an opening already granted. *Die Lichtung* is prior to anything that may disclose itself within it; indeed, it is the undisclosable—unrepresentable—condition of disclosure itself.

Let us take stock of where we have come so far in our exposition of Heidegger. The human life is a life of building/dwelling/thinking, a life of linguistic and behavioral practices that bring things to presence; and a life of fully poetic dwelling is a life in which, in that building, one "measures oneself against the godhead." I have taken the image of the godhead to be the same as the image of the clearing. To measure oneself against the godhead is to give attention to the unrepresentable and ultimate condition of all our (conditional) presentation of things. In "'. . . Poetically Man Dwells . . .'" Heidegger reminds us of Hölderlin's lines: "Is God unknown? / Is he manifest like the sky? I'd sooner / Believe the latter." God—the godhead—cannot be entirely unknown. If it were, how could it be the measure against

17. This is a rare admission of error on Heidegger's part, as he himself had earlier claimed both these things.

which we are constantly measuring ourselves? God is manifest, hints Hölderlin, "like the sky." And what is the sky? The sky is the blank but luminous background against which we see whatever we see.[18] The sky is the "lighting" (*die Lichtung*) in the shelter of which every thing appears: "The measure consists in the way in which the god who remains unknown, is revealed to us *as* such by the sky. God's appearance through the sky consists in a disclosing that lets us see what conceals itself, but lets us see it not by seeking to wrest what is concealed out of its concealedness, but only by guarding the concealed in its self-concealment. Thus the unknown God appears as the unknown by way of the sky's manifestness. This appearance is the measure against which man measures himself" ("PMD," 223).

To dwell poetically on the earth as a mortal is to live in awareness of the godhead, the clearing, the blank but lightening sky. It is to live so as to measure oneself against that Nothing—that No-thing—that grants the possibility of the presence of and the Being of the things that there are. Within that clearing, as Heidegger puts it, brightness wars with darkness. There we struggle against particular ignorances and incapacities to bring forth truth.

Conditionality and Pathos

So far in this chapter I have taken Heidegger's idiom pretty much for granted, but the notion of poetic dwelling on the earth as a mortal can usefully be separated both from his peculiar vocabulary and from his mythical (and perhaps ultimately political) ambitions to recast the history of the West as the inexorable progress of *Seinsvergessenheit* (forgetfulness of Being). The key to such separations is to see that each of the forms of life Heidegger discusses in his essays after the turn—*die Technik,* poetic dwelling—is itself just a particular set of linguistic and behavioral practices, a way of talking and acting, a way within which things come to Being before us. As such practices, and as the things brought into our awareness within such practices, they can be classified in terms of the kind of attention they foster.

In the first place, there are those linguistic and behavioral practices that let things appear unconditionally for our use. The coffee mug,

18. Here the trope of the sky is functioning differently from the way it did in the fourfold. Here the sky—a way of talking about the clearing—is not just social practices, which can be brought to presence before us as such. In Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin here, the sky can never be brought to presence as an entity.

the television set, the toothbrush—all these things refer no sustained attention to themselves. In fact, these things are such as to disappear into our ordinarily successful use of them, all the better to fold us into the lives within which they (transiently) appear, and which they make possible. Such things are smooth and featureless; they have little if any reality as particular things, intended as they are merely to facilitate—as transparently as possible—our unimpeded activity toward more unimpeded activity. These, of course, are the practices Heidegger calls *die Technik,* and the things that appear within them are *Bestand.* The Heideggerian labels are not important. What matters is our recognition that such practices and things actually do exist, that much of our present life is constituted by them, and that our awareness of that fact—an awareness that comes only intermittently—is the source of our mood of normal nihilism.

What is crucial is to see that these practices and things foster and support only a particular, and quite limited, kind of attention to the world they create. The things appearing within these practices appear, in the normal case, only so as to disappear. They encourage and support no enduring attention to themselves, nor to the practices that bring them to presence. It is not too much to say that these things and practices, because they offer no resistance, no foothold for our steady attention, cause our lives to disappear from us even as we are living them. By facilitating our unimpeded activity, by rushing us ever further and faster into the future, they cause the present to vanish; they make our lives—the lives we are actually living here and now—all but invisible to us. Aided by such things, we are continually sped toward a future that never fully appears.

But such things and practices are not the only ones there are. There are also practices that bring to presence things that carry on their faces the various conditions of their own presencing. In the first instance such things may call our attention to the particular conditions of the life that made them. These are things that celebrate their own autochthony, that brazenly call attention to their own style. With such self-consciousness comes the acknowledgment that their particular style is one among many possibilities, that the life out of which they come is only one life among many. Such a thing announces its own conditionality. It did not just mysteriously appear (in order to disappear); it was made *by* someone in particular—perhaps by an identifiable individual—*for* someone in particular. Such things don't pretend to be for everyone, or for all time; they come out of a certain life and are supposed to put one in mind of that life as one confronts them. In this way they make it possible for the character of a life to

appear more fully to those whose life it is. They bring to presence, one might say, a particular present.

Think of the Easter eggs made by Peter Carl Fabergé for the Russian imperial family. (I choose this example specifically for the moral queasiness it may induce; not every truthful thing is as benign as Heidegger's Schwarzwald farmhouse.) These ornaments are perfect examples of things that exhibit the specific conditions of the life out of which they come and for which they are made. Their fantastic attention to detail and their extravagant design; the huge wealth necessary to underwrite their creation; the fact that they are Easter eggs, given to celebrate a Christian and a family holiday of particular significance to the Romanovs—all these features (and others besides) in the eggs require and reward a certain sort of attention. These features deliberately make one aware of the kind of life that produced the thing that has them. Fabergé's jeweled and golden treasures are not supposed to disappear smoothly into some use one might make of them. They are supposed to offer one—if, say, one were the recipient of this gift—a chance to reflect upon, to attend to, the particularly fortunate circumstances of one's life: wealth, leisure, a taste for beauty, the salvation of one's immortal soul, and so forth. The style of these Fabergé eggs is excessive and intentional; it is there to offer the resistance necessary to a particular sort of self-reflection and self-awareness. (That such self-awareness may be complacent and narrow is, of course, always a danger. Knowledge becomes virtue—if it ever does—only when sufficiently comprehensive.)

There is, however, a second level of attention a thing may insist upon, a level beyond that of the specific conditions of the particular life that produced it. The thing may in its features call explicit attention to (what one might call) the general and universal conditions of human life itself. This, I take it, is the kind of attention Heidegger was praising when he claimed that a thing "gathers the fourfold." The Black Forest farmhouse built two centuries ago exhibits not just the specific conditions of that sort of agricultural life (though it certainly does that); rather, "the four" are for Heidegger inescapable conditions of any human life whatsoever. Any human life, he thinks, is lived on the earth, under the sky, before the divinities, and among the mortals; to the extent that the things built by that life show—insist upon—those general and universal conditions directly and unambiguously, the more truthful a life it is. Not every life is the life the Romanovs had (thank goodness, one may say), and thus the Fabergé eggs—though in some ways remarkably true to the specific conditions of *that* life—do not call us to deep reflection on our own condition.

(They may do some of that, of course, perhaps by fostering a certain amount of resentment or, as with the collector Malcolm Forbes, making possible a hearty self-congratulation.) The farmhouse is more truthful than those treasures. It exhibits not only its own specific conditions of presencing but also—and quite perspicuously—the general and universal conditions under which any human thing comes to presence. It reminds us in a more general way that "[w]e have left behind us the presupposition of all unconditionedness" ("T," 181).

Here one may wonder whether Heidegger is insufficiently historicist. Is it really plausible to claim that "the four" are conditions of any and every human life whatsoever? And is Heidegger really claiming that? Neither question is easy to answer. It is certainly possible to read him there as making claims only about *us:* we end-of-century, Western intellectuals must recognize, either by way of fullness or by way of privation, "the four" as dimensions of any life *we* can see as human. And any attempt to approach the first question head-on ("Does every human life necessarily look to the future for apocalyptic transformation?") raises knotty epistemological problems. (How could we tell whether or not we are reading into alien form of life the very features we seem to find there, especially when the features are such general ones?) It is not necessary to think one has answers to such questions in order to see some point to what Heidegger is saying, however. Even if we were to be stringently historicist and deny the truth (or even the sense) of claims about "universal human conditions" or "the basic character of human existence" ("PMD," 215) we can still recognize that some of a life's conditions are more general than others. For all the differences between the Romanovs and the Russian serfs, there were some conditions of life they shared; and one can therefore judge the truth of their things in terms of how faithfully they instantiate that common life. The Fabergé eggs may wonderfully exhibit some of the conditions of the life of the ruling family for which they were made, but they do little to show—except perhaps by way of deliberate omission—the conditions of the life of the ruled. Indeed, those poor and exploited subjects are (almost) completely invisible in the eggs' enameled surfaces, although their harsh labor was essential to the wealth that produced such excess of style. In that way the eggs are, while more truthful than my toothbrush, less truthful than they might be. They reveal less than they might of the conditions of the life that brought them forth. One can imagine a progress of such truthfulness in things: from things that tell more and more of the truth about the specific form of life that brought them forth (e.g., late nineteenth-century imperial Russian) to things that tell more and more about

wider and wider cross-sections of that life (e.g., late-nineteenth-century European, post-Enlightenment European, and so forth). The key is the *truthfulness*—the power of revelation—of the things. In what way do these things show in themselves the conditions, at whatever level of generality, of the life that produced them? Heidegger's idea, expressed in his talk about "gathering the fourfold," is that some things carry on their faces a way for us to see what they determinately are, in the sense that they exhibit and insist upon their own granting conditions, both specific and general. One can accept and value that idea without having to believe that at some level of generality all lives have the same set of such conditions, and that they are exactly four in number.

So far we have identified two sorts of linguistic and behavioral practices, and thus two sorts of things produced within such practices. There are those things, such as the coffee mug or the toothbrush, that (seek to) obscure or deny the conditions of their own production, and there are those things, such as the Fabergé egg or the Black Forest farmhouse, that insistently reveal (at some level of generality, and with some degree of success) the conditions of the life that brought them forth. There is also a third sort of practice, and therefore a third sort of thing. There are those practices which bring to presence things that exhibit not only the conditions—whether specific or general—of their own presencing but also call attention to the metacondition of that presencing. These are things that call attention to the conditioning condition of conditionality itself; they are things that direct us to consider what Heidegger calls "the clearing." In this way they remind us of the unrepresentable background of lighting against which anything that appears, appears. They remind us that whatever we have is something given, given not by a god or by a mysterious cosmic event (since those notions are themselves just particular figures appearing on the lighting ground) but by something that cannot be represented as a "something" at all but which nevertheless is really and necessarily "there." *Es gibt:* "It gives/There is." To give attention to the event of *die Lichtung,* as these things (presumably) make it possible for us to do, is to indulge a kind of post-philosophical "thinking," as Heidegger calls it; a kind of thinking different from metaphysics, as the aim of metaphysics since Plato has always been to identify the ground of Being as a particular sort of (super)being. To be reminded of the clearing is to be made aware that Being—sense, significance, meaning, lighted presence—ultimately has no "ground," if by that one means something that can be identified as itself a "something." To speak of the clearing, the light-*ing,* is

to speak of that which one can never close one's hand around, any more than one can grasp the luminescence that spills from the lamp onto the table. The lighting is an "event" (and even that is a metaphor, of course), not a "thing." It can be attended to, considered, "thought," but not represented. We cannot bring it before ourselves, any more than we can bring before ourselves the ground of a Gestalt figure *as ground.*

Of course one will be asking for some examples of these remarkable things that exhibit not only their own conditions of appearance but also exhibit attention to *die Lichtung,* and to give those examples will be the burden of my next chapter. But before doing so I want to say a bit about the way in which such things, and in particular the practices that bring them to presence, can serve as a counterweight to our mood of normal nihilism. In this book's progress we have gradually become clearer about how our normal nihilism comes to be. In Nietzsche's originating account, sketched in Chapter 1, normal nihilism seems to spring directly from the explicit, intellectual recognition of the radical contingency of just those features of my life that seemed (and always already claim to be) proof against it. Once I recognize that my life is a life of "value"—that it is constituted by structures of interpretation that are themselves radically conditional causal mechanisms posited by will to power in its own service—then a diminution of that life's *Pathos* is inevitable. How can I give myself fully and joyfully to a life that is being imposed upon me, a life into which I have been thrown; and moreover a life that is only one among many possible forms of life, a life that lacks Reality's imprimatur? Contingency means a loss of power. A club I just happened to wake up a member of is not a club that can command my fervent loyalty. And with the recognition of that contingency can come a rabid insistence on *oneself* (conceived either as individual or as group) as the ultimate condition of everything: if God is dead, then everything falls back upon me. This is the point of Nietzsche's famous *mot* about changing the "thus it must be" to a "so I have willed it." Once my values have been recognized to be (only) values, the only way I can restore their full *Pathos* is by making them specifically and explicitly conditional upon *me;* that is, upon my self-grounding, transvaluating *will.* Thus the Overman: our normal nihilism is overcome only when the self-grounding will explicitly affirms itself as the originating condition of all value, which is to say for Nietzsche, the originating condition of all Being.

Heidegger's account of technology has shown that it's not (as Nietzsche thought) simply the intellectual/philosophical recognition of con-

tingency or conditionality that provokes our normal nihilist mood. Rather, the loss of our life's ordinary *Pathos* occurs when such recognition takes place within a practical life that denies contingency altogether. As a life ruled by *die Technik,* our practices produce anonymous and interchangeable things intended to facilitate our unimpeded, orderly activity within those practices; much of our ability to give ourselves over to such activity depends upon the invisibility of the practices themselves. Our lives flow along smoothly in their normal channels only so long as those channels are not noticed as such. Self-consciousness increases viscosity. Attention to the channels tends to clog the flow. The practices of technology produce things that function as invisible, self-lubricating funnels of our activity, helping us to easily move forward toward more such forward movement, toward more such forward movement, toward more such forward movement. The unconditionality we normally experience in our lives of *die Technik* is a practical (not a theoretical) unconditionality; our practices and our things appear and disappear in our use of them to facilitate our unimpeded, orderly movement into the future. They call no attention to themselves or to the particular conditions of their hold on us. We flow from place to place, from activity to activity, as if the containers of our flow were not (conventionally cut) channels at all but were reality's own headwaters. When that sense of unconditionality is interrupted, either by accident or by the intrusion upon our attention of a different kind of thing or practice, we are brought to a stand, and our ordinary immersion in our ordinary practices is suspended. In that way their ordinary power over us, their ordinary pathos for us, is diminished. For later Heidegger, it is the noticeable appearance of our ordinary, technological lives before us, their visibility to us as our particular lives, that produces the mood of loss and lack one may call normal nihilism, a mood that will (normally) be quickly covered over (though not wholly obliterated) by one's swift reimmersion in one's routines.

In Nietzsche's original representation of it, our normal nihilism seems to spring from an insight into the deep and bitter nature of things, to be the result of our having seen something we had heretofore—gulled by philosophy or theology—been blind to. For Heidegger, however, normal nihilism is less a sustained philosophical insight than a mood, a mood predicated on an interruption in the steady progress of our orderly movement toward ever more orderly movement. Like Nietzsche, Heidegger too would count our nihilism as a truth; but it is not a philosophical truth that penetrates to the alleged heart of things. ("Now I see it: the final truth is that there is no final

truth.") Rather, the truth of nihilism is the *practical* revelation of the self-concealing, technological character of our ordinary practices. It is the *fact* that when they become fully visible for us in all their conditionality (just that conditionality which they themselves have always so successfully hidden), then they no longer engage us in their normal way. The *Pathos* of our technological practices diminishes in direct proportion to our ability to see them as such, that is, to notice them at all.

"Poetic dwelling on the earth as a mortal" is a kind of life that accepts fully the contingency and conditionality of whatever there is. In fact, these linguistic and behavioral practices make a virtue of producing things—words, houses, jugs—that exhibit that conditionality in unmistakable ways. The things brought to presence by this sort of life are emphatically *not* anonymous and interchangeable. They wear on their faces the conditions, both specific and general, of the life that made them appear. Moreover, and in ways we have yet to discuss in detail, they exhibit in themselves the ultimate condition, what one might call the metacondition, of their appearance: *die Lichtung,* the clearing, the conditioning condition of conditionality itself. Thus in two ways these practices successfully resist the loss of *Pathos* we have been detailing above. First, since the life of poetic dwelling is a life that explicitly and continually acknowledges its conditionality—and does that by means of the things it brings to presence, things that refuse to disappear into our unimpeded use of them—there is no practical incongruity between the lives we are living (as such dwellers) and our recognition of the conditionality of those lives. In poetic dwelling we are always aware, aware in the ways we bodily and intellectually comport ourselves to our things, of that manifold conditionality; and thus in our practice we instantiate the truth—the conditionality—of that practice. Because "we have left behind us the presupposition of all unconditionedness" ("T," 181), and left it behind not just through possessing some new philosophical insight but through instantiating a new kind of practice, then the power of those practices is uncompromised by any inadvertent reminder of their contingency. There is no gap between the truth of the practice (as conditional) and the comportment of those of us constituted by the practice; thus there is no rift through which the *Pathos* of those practices can seep away. It is, one might say, the fully and continually acknowledged *truth* of our lives of poetic dwelling that safeguards their power for us.

Second, acknowledgment of *die Lichtung* preserves the *Pathos* of those practices that foster such attention; in particular this acknowl-

edgment guards against the temptation to instantiate the human as the ultimate condition of whatever there is. To be reminded by one's things, and thus to enact in one's everyday comportment toward one's things, that the appearance of those things is always something "given" to one within a self-lighting space that cannot itself be understood as any particular thing or social practice, is to be brought up short before that which one cannot control or even negotiate with. It is to be made aware of one's dependence—not, of course, a dependence merely causal—on something (or, rather, no-thing) that cannot be inserted into the realm of onto-theology, and yet something to which attention, both practical and intellectual, can fruitfully be directed. The continuously renewed reality of that attention gives a particular quality to a life. To live in the light of the clearing is not to live as we ordinarily do. The truth of the life of fully poetic dwelling grants that life a particular *Pathos,* a peculiar power to safeguard itself against the corruptions we ordinarily endure. A fuller account of that *Pathos* must wait for the next chapter, where specific instances of such attention will be discussed; for now one can say that attention to the clearing restores to us something of the religious person's sense of being sheltered by the fully present and perfect realm of the "true world." Attention to the clearing (an attention, remember, that will show itself both in thought and in practice) returns one to a sense of one's finitude, to a sense of one's smallness before the ultimate condition of one's own self-appearance. And yet—this is crucial—the clearing is not something that can be worshiped, served, or appeased through any form of violence. It demands no sacrifices, neither of sons nor of words; and no stultifying theology can be erected within its precincts. To acknowledge oneself as having been "granted" the life one has, is to be able to recover, over and over again, the sense of the wonder of things that, according to Aristotle, is the original impulse to philosophy. "Why is there something and not nothing?" Asked in the right tone of voice—or, better, embodied in a particular kind of comportment toward things (the lover's touch, the poet's breath on a word, the farmer's care for her land)—that question is a thinking about the clearing, a thinking that over and over again enlivens the life of which it is a part.

One could think of it this way. Those practices Heidegger calls technological create and require a sense of their own unconditionality. In our normal technological activity with things, they and we appear and interact within invisible "frames" that (intend to) place us at one another's disposal for (relatively) effortless and thoughtless ordering. When those practices are well at work, we and our things are sped

efficiently into the future, insulated from any sense of conditionality by the consolations of movement itself. But when those frames that hold and guide us are themselves made visible (e.g., through some sort of breakdown), the resulting sense of conditionality comes as a shock, and interferes (for a time) with our capacity to act as is normal for us. Expressed intellectually, that inhibition shows itself as *contingency,* a sense that our *Lebensformen* do not possess the absoluteness they implicitly claim. (Thus Nietzsche's talk of self-devaluating values: that could only happen when values become visible *as such,* and attention to them begins to clog our action with them.) Expressed in praxis, that inhibition shows itself as a particular *mood,* compounded both of bone-weariness and an inability to rest with what one has. It is the mood of the tired shopper who, running low on both cash and desire, has no more home to return to and can only push on to the next sale. I have called it the mood of normal nihilism.

In those practices that make things which "gather the fourfold," there is the explicit disavowal of unconditionality, but the resulting conditionality is conceived and experienced not as contingency but as autochthony or rootedness. No such practices claim for themselves the kind of absoluteness that sows the seeds of our normal nihilism; in the things made by those practices there is always explicit attention given to the conditions, particular and general, of the life that brought them forth. Hard as it is to express, one who has lived, even if for a time, outside the practices of technology knows there is a difference here. It is mainly a difference of rhythm, as if one habitually spoke one's native language slowly and deliberately enough to taste its particular flavor. What if one were now to *live* that slowly and deliberately, with that quality of attention to the particular and its conditions? It is possible, in some lives, to come to know of one's conditionedness without feeling that as diminishment; on the contrary, it can be an access of exhilaration, a source of heightened *Pathos.* "We are just who we are." "These little things—these streams, this soil, these books, these freedoms—have made us." Said in one way, these can be expressions of loss; in another, of curious joy.

But it is not as if there is no sense of absoluteness at all in such lives; to the extent to which they "measure themselves against the godhead" there is a perception of that which gives rise to what there is. One is rooted in something, *given* by something that is better—not truly—called an event (*das Ereignis:* "appropriation"; *die Lichtung:* "clearing") than a thing. The bright but blank sky against which all things appear is not itself a thing, but it can be noticed; and such notice is not (necessarily) trivial.

This sense of finitude, the sense that everything (even oneself as seen by oneself) appears against (or "from") the sky, prevents the recognition of one's conditionality from leading to the hypertrophy of the human that one sometimes sees in—or perhaps projects onto—a thinker like Nietzsche. Attention to the clearing forces one to recognize that even one's own appearance to oneself is something "granted" to one, not something one has done for oneself. It is impossible to believe oneself to be the "self-created creator of all values" (or whatever) when one realizes that the possibility of one's seeing oneself as that creator (or as anything at all) is a possibility given to one by a condition one can never know or name. Such a sense of having been "given" to oneself (as whatever one takes oneself to be)—but "given" by no-thing, by that which can in no way be comprehended or cajoled—is a reliable check on our temptation to set ourselves up as the replacement for the God that (to our happiness) went away.

To "dwell poetically on the earth as a mortal," then, is Heidegger's attempt to reconstitute what it might mean for us to be religious. It is to answer the *Seinsfrage* without indulging *Seinsvergessenheit.* Being—granted by and in "the clearing"—is in no way identified with a being, no matter how grand or mysterious. To live in the light of the clearing is to find practices of building, of making things, such that those things embody attention to both (1) the conditions of their own making and (2) the metacondition of all making, human and otherwise. Insofar as our lives are constituted by those sorts of linguistic and behavioral practices, those lives will be protected both from the loss of *Pathos* characteristic of our mood of normal nihilism and from the sense of limitless humanism that feeds our various addictions and simultaneously despoils the earth that shelters us. But what would such a life actually look like? It is now time to examine some concrete examples of what it might (even *should*) mean for us to be post-philosophically religious.

8
Attunement and Thinking

Michel Haar

From the well-known descriptions of primordial affectivity or "affectedness" (*Befindlichkeit*)[1] in *Being and Time*, to the recognition of the historical import[2] of mood (*Stimmung*), it would seem that the power imparted to *mood to disclose the world most primordially* has been consolidated and amplified. After anxiety and boredom, other moods also seen as "fundamental" ones (*Grundstimmungen*) were discovered and analyzed in the 1930s. Their newest and most general characteristic – especially in the case of Hölderlinian "sacred grief,"[3] or of the moods of wonder and terror[4] – is to furnish the basis and ground for epochs in the history of being. But as early as the first analyses of *Being and Time*, mood sets forth, or rather has always already unfolded, being-in-the-world in its totality: the totality made up of projection, being with others, and all the possibilities of praxis, starting from a given situation. "It [*Stimmung*] is an existential and fundamental mode of *opening*, *equally primordial* [with], the world, being-with, and existence . . ."[5] Our moods reveal the co-presence of all things in a way more comprehensive than any comprehension, more immediate than any perception. As a way of access to a preconceptual totality which, as *What is Metaphysics?* shows, precedes and makes possible all metaphysical surpassing of being as a whole, mood not only exposes for the first time a secret – and so already unthought – basis of all metaphysics, but prefigures the mutation of seeing thanks to which the theme of an attunement of man *by* being will be developed. That being, understood as destining, sending, history, "tunes man in," then means, among other things, that all *Stimmung* is *Bestimmung*, or determination of an epochal climate. Already in *On the Essence of Truth*, a transitional text if ever there was one,[6], we can read this phrase: "All the behavior of *historical man* is, whether he expressly feels it or not, whether he conceives it or not, attuned in a mood and transported by this mood into the totality of beings."[7] I have italicized the expression *historical man*. Since mood is relative to history or to the epochness of being (in a relationship that is, moreover, ambiguous and difficult to clarify, since moods, especially if fundamental, are at once determined by and determining of the epoch), Heidegger's position here marks a *turning* with respect to that of *Being and Time*. For the later Heidegger, all action and all thought, all works

are at once "borne ekstatically" and inscribed by some mood or other in the totality of an epoch. All mood, even individual, escapes reduction to subjective sentiment as well as to background or general climate. It is not reduced to an historical given, but is rather the very style in which an historical unit presents itself and so is thoroughly diffused.

In *Being and Time*, just as all projecting is "thrown," all comprehension is certainly "attuned" (*gestimmt*). And the "affective situation" is without doubt the way in which the irretrievable anteriority or the putative "natural" already-there of being-in-the-world is discovered or felt as a totality. But affectedness or mood is not placed explicitly in relation to an epochal horizon. Before Heidegger's lecture on Hölderlin, the concept of "world" is quasi ahistorical. In the later thought, being disposed is interpreted as the first resonance in man of the *Anspruch* (demanding address) of being, the first hearing of its sending. *Stimmung* is understood as *Entsprechung*, that is, response and "correspondence"[8] to the *Stimme* (voice) of being: a "voice" not to be made into a subject, since it plays or constitutes merely the counterpart of mood, its other face, its non-human origin. That mood is "called" by the "voice" means only in fact that its origin is not human subjectivity, but the world, or rather being itself as time and history.

But if it is true that mood is the hearing of being, how is it to be distinguished from thought, which is also defined as response? Precisely in that mood is of itself *Sprachlos*, speechless: the silent tonality whose very muteness calls and demands words all the more strongly. Thought is the accomplishment in language of a giving of being to man, who is first attuned in the silence of mood. In *What is Metaphysics?*, we recall, the fundamental mood of anxiety, in producing a distance from being as a whole, in suspending the significant involvement of *Dasein* in the world, makes *Dasein* temporarily mute, unable to utter the least discourse on being, and thus incapable of thought! "Anxiety leaves us speechless. . . . Any sentence formed by the word 'is' falls quiet in its presence."[9] Yet Heidegger emphasizes in the lecture, "What is Philosophy?" that if philosophy is the "correspondence" with being through speech (*Entsprechung* means etymologically, "speech in response"), this speech only finds its *precise* articulation against the background of a *mood*: "all precision in saying is based on a disposition of correspondence" (*Jede Prazision des Sagens in eine Disposition des Entsprechens gründet*).[10] While substituting the word *Disposition* for *Stimmung*,[11] perhaps to be better understood by the French audience at this lecture, Heidegger twice reaffirms, by playing on the root word *stimmen*, that all conceptual determination depends upon a certain mood. It is only from *Gestimmtheit* (being disposed, disposition, mood) that the philosophical utterance receives its *Bestimmtheit*, which is to say its determined, precise, situated character. There can be no *Bestimmtheit*, or determination of the philosophical utterance, without a mood opening to the being of beings as a whole. Such a mood is not a vague sentiment or a simple atmosphere, but always a *Grundstimmung*, a fundamental attunement, at once determined and determining *for the epoch*.

Rapidly, Heidegger evokes three of these epoch-making *Grundstimmungen* which organize thought and give it its original thrust: *astonishment*[12] for the Greeks; doubt and its corollary certainty in Modern Times (the mood proper to

Richtigkeit, exactitude of rationality); finally a mood of the age of completed metaphysics, difficult to embrace under a single label in as much as today "fear and anxiety mingle with hope and confidence." This ambiguous contemporary mood, which does not touch calculating thought – still always marked by doubt and certainty – is principally defined, as we shall see, by fright. This dread or terror seizes thought in the face of the abyss of being whose history is on its way to completion and which awaits a new beginning. It would seem that there are only a very few *Grundstimmungen*, only one apparently, in each great epoch of Being.

In the face of these major historical moods – variations of which are the "sacred grief" which Hölderlin celebrates or, more recently, the "absence of distress" which marks the double face of technology, a mixture of extreme security and the presentiment of disaster – what rank should then be given to the nonhistorical moods, principally anxiety and boredom, which are analyzed in the context of *Sein und Zeit*? Should they simply be subsumed under the contemporary historical moods of dread and the absence of distress? Do they keep their specific truth unchanged, as moods which do not give access in any degree whatsoever to "thought" or to utterance concerning being, but rather effect a silent ontological modification of *Dasein*, by allowing a view on the whole of finite temporality? Anxiety and boredom both lead to a narrowing of time, a decisive instant where Dasein, squarely facing the repeatable character of its past and anticipating its future to the extreme limit, finds itself able to assume its own temporality. Now the silence of anxiety – which makes possible the silence of the resolution by which *Dasein* projects itself authentically, temporalizes itself – is situated, it would seem, outside all epochal continuity, outside the "universal" history of being. Is there a place in the later Heidegger for nonhistorical moods? What then about individual anxiety?

1 The ahistorical relation between mood and metaphysics

To return to the first of the questions just formulated, what structural, phenomenological relation – at first glance improbable and yet necessary – can we discover between affectedness and conceptual language, between mood and philosophy? There would seem to be, in the early Heidegger, an irreconcilable heterogeneity, a hiatus between mood on the one hand, which silently reveals thrownness (individual facticity as well as the obscure factical base of the world), and on the other hand, philosophy, which names the being of beings or thought, which tries to approach unconcealment (*aletheia*).

The link between the two is explicitly established as early as *What is Metaphysics?* (1929). The logic of understanding, the traditional metaphysical rationality in its various forms, can never conceive a totality in which questioning is in fact implicated and situated, or more exactly, it is not the totality in itself, but being *situated in the totality* that escapes rational conceptualization. "There remains finally an essential difference between *seizing* conceptually the totality of

being in itself, and finding oneself amidst being in totality. The former is fundamentally impossible. The latter happens continually to our Dasein."[14] This event which lays hold of Dasein is brought about by a primordial relationship between mood and thought.

One must start from this notion of factical totality or of totality given beforehand in mood. Mood reveals that the whole of beings is *given before* any judgement that affirms or negates it. By pretending to *deduce* totality as objective, (starting, for example, from the principle of reason), traditional metaphysics forgets the prerequisite self-giving of the open. Now this opening as entirety springs from both facticity and transcendence. On the one hand, Dasein "is found" in mood in the *already-there* of itself, of others, and of the world. The particular meaning of this already-there is that some possibilities of being-thrown are *determined*. Three times Heidegger repeats the word *determined* in the very definition of thrownness. Thrownness discloses, he says, "the fact that Dasein is always already as mine and as such, in a *determined* world, and in relation to a *determined* sphere of *determined* intra-worldly beings."[15] But on the other hand, this factical determination concerns *possibilities*. Dasein "sees" its project through such and such a mood.[16] There is a circle here: the project is thrown, but inversely being-thrown is possibilized, projected in the possible, and this is done by mood itself. Mood is the reciprocal implication of the fact of being with being as project. This is why it shows a sort of universality and apparent objectivity. It emanates phenomenologically from the world or from things taken in their entirety, as that which touches, strikes, or surprises us. All mood is phenomenologically, preconceptually universal and total. It is the whole of being-in-the-world that reveals itself with such and such a coloring or climate of joy or sadness, and never a thing taken in isolation. There is also totality inasmuch as the subject subject and the object are indissociable within it. One is implicated in a situation experienced from the first without any need for recourse to the self-enclosed interiority of a feeling or judgement. This non-objectifiable whole is at once a given and a possible totality within which projects of action or thought can develop. "The moods," writes Heidegger in his 1929–30 lecture, "are the presupposition and milieu of thought and action."[17] This had already been clear in *Being and Time*. Were we not to experience the moods of security and fear, we would not come to know what there is. The pure perception of the occurrent, even if it delved to the core of being, would leave us eternally at a distance; in order for *Dasein* to desire to know, it has to have been at least implicated, "concerned" in some fashion, if not theatened.[18]

Whence the criticism, from the point of view of mood, of theoretical thought, or of representation. "Theoretical thought has always already dulled the world, by reducing it to the uniformity of purely subsistent being."[19] However, while in *Being and Time* Heidegger shows that knowledge, *theoria*, constitutes a more limited opening than the original opening of mood (derived, however, not from the latter but from the practical utensilary relationship in some way suspended), seven years later, in the 1934–35 lecture on Hölderlin, he goes so far as to define representation in general as issuing from a certain repression or "stifling" of mood produced in order to veil this very repression. This notion of repression of mood was already present in *Being and Time*: "Mood is ordinarily repressed"[20] Here is the text of the lecture on Hölderlin:

> It is only on the basis of a certain belittling and stifling of mood, an apparent attempt to forget it, that one arrives at what we call the simple representation of things and objects. For representation is not first, as if it were so to speak by a piling up or grouping of represented objects that something like a world is constructed in strata. A world never allows itself to be opened and then stuck back together beginning from a multitude of perceived objects reassembled after the fact; rather it is that which in advance is most originally and inherently manifest, within which alone such and such a thing may come to meet us. The world's opening movement *comes about* in the fundamental mood. The power to transport, integrate, and thus open, that a fundamental mood possesses is therefore a power to found, for it places *Dasein* upon its foundations facing its abysses. The basic mood determines for our Dasein the place and time that are inherently open to its being (place being not understood spatially nor time temporally in its habitual sense)."[21]

Mood does not *think* the totality, but rather makes it *come about*, emerge more originarily than representation, which proceeding by construction or assemblage, can only think after the fact. Mood makes thought possible as an event of being. When anxiety results in the negation of beings as a whole, the negation is not a thought in the sense of a representation, but rather an experience. Mood initiates into the very principle of thought as the experience of being, an experience which is that of a dispossession or a decentering of Dasein. By itself, thought is incapable of producing essential negation, that is, the principle of all negation, the Nothing. Mood is a prelude to thought as a setting in motion and as a condition given by being. It allows us to feel that, in anxiety, the essence of thought is not to posit being, but to be posited by being. Mood leads into thought, as it were, overtaken (surprised) by being.

The second relation established between mood and thought is engendered from their common correspondence to the Nothing, this Nothing "belonging originarily to being," without which there would be no manifestation of beings as such.[22] All mood, says Heidegger, refers us back to a situation of *distress-and-constraint*. Or, conversely, distress constrains in the mode of mood.[23] As a new figure of thrownness, distress does not refer to any material poverty, or any situation that would give alarm by virtue of an objective lack; it refers to a radical powerlessness, a fundamental absence, negation, or rather negativity. All distress implies: first a not being able to "escape," practically speaking, but also an incapacity to *think* this very negation, an ignorance, a not knowing. All distress – and Heidegger uses this expression several times in the last part of the 1937–38 lecture (vol. 45) – is a "knowing neither the way out nor the way in."[24] In other words, being without access to being as such, being disarmed, without recourse: being "out(side) of proportion," Pascal would have said. And this disarray resembles Pascalian dread. Distress is the inverse of *Techné* and of assurance. Not knowing how to get along, to get one's bearings, to manage, not with respect to this or that, but *in the face of everything*. The true distress of thought is not a localized, ephemeral aporia, but the collapse of established signposts, indetermination taking hold of being in its entirety. This indetermination, says Heidegger, if it is *sustained* as "determining distress", if it reaches from

mood to thought, is then richer than all knowledge possessed and all certainty. It is "the contrary of a lack": a "surplus," a "superabundance."[25] For not knowing and disarray stretch out then to the limits of being. There is no way out or in because the whole becomes problematic. In astonishment, it can be said, everything is in question and in doubt. Everything is still more in question in the dread of the bottomless abyss.

Mood each time translates the degree of negativity of the fundamental climate, a degree varying with its historical modality. For the not knowing and the not being able of distress must be understood according to the history of being and not as a psychological dimension of man. To be astonished is a very precise way of not being able to explain. We shall return to this point. Astonishment does not yet know the why, but moves toward it almost immediately. Here there enters no fear of the void, no threat of the absence of ground. Whence the question which appears towards the end of metaphysics, "Why is there being rather than Nothing?", where the nothing is present in a quasi-rhetorical way. The question contains "the answer left blank." In fact, there is already no more astonishment here, but the mood is already that of certainty. Little negativity enters into the marveling of the Greeks; negativity is expelled and set fixedly on the "impassible way" of Parmenides' *Poem*. On the contrary, the mood of doubt, voluntary and calculated, leaves almost no portion to nothingness. As for dread, it allows the Nothing to show through in all its power.

A third possible correlation between mood and thought is formed beginning with a common transport, transposition, or "exposition."[26] The transport, says Heidegger, is "the essential feature of what we know by the name of mood or feeling."[27] The transport is another ekstatic movement of transcendence toward the totality of the world. This ekstatic movement transports while being implicated with the world, specifies Heidegger, in his 1934–35 lecture:[28] it joins Dasein simultaneously to history and to the Sacred, but also to the nocturnal seat of the world: the Earth.

Even if mood is transportative, however, it does not discover these relations as *already extant* ones. It doubtless founds the space-time of a whole new relation to the world, but with an *indetermination* as to the essence of this relation and, likewise, the essence of encountered beings. To think is to let oneself first be carried by this ekstatic movement, to gain access by mood to this moving opening of being, but then immediately to grasp in language the determination of the relation thus revealed. Mood is transport, exposition in being; it allows being to be, but thought alone *names* being. "Thought," writes Heidegger, in his 1937–38 lecture, "here means letting what is emerge in its being . . . grasping it as such and by that fact naming it initially in its beingness."[29]

Thought *completes* transport by articulation. This determination by the thought of the indetermination of mood is not a break with it. Yet mood is more than a simple *inclination* or a penchant which would continue harmoniously in thought. There is a *leap*. By revealing such and such an uncovering and/or recovering of the world, mood "constrains," that is to say, pushes thought strongly on to the path of a "decision" as to the radical limits of being. "This transport puts mankind originally in a position to decide the most decisive relations with being and non-being."[30]

2 The double historical turning of fundamental attunement

With terror, the *historical* dimension of anxiety is uncovered. The word terror appears for the first time (in a published text) in 1943, in the Afterword to *What is Metaphysics?*, but it is present both in the winter semester lecture of 1937–38, *Grundfragen der Philosophie* (*GA* 45), and in the *Beiträge*, the large, recently published manuscript dating from the same years. It is in the Afterword that metaphysics receives its first historical definition. Metaphysics is not only the truth of being as such, the conceptualizing of the beingness of being; metaphysics is the *history* of that truth, that conceptualization. As we know, the Afterword defends the lecture against certain accusations (nihilism, scorn of logic, philosophy of sentiment), but above all it specifies the meaning of anxiety relative to that period of history in which the will to will and universal calculability mark Being. Terror is anxiety in the face of the disquieting abyss (*Abgrund*), which escapes calculating thought. The hidden abyss upon which the assurance of technology is projected is more terrorizing than anxiety producing. Terror is as it were *anxiety about being*, "essential anxiety." Now this anxiety comes from being itself as abyss, which is to say as unfounded, incalculable, withdrawn from any goal. The "devouring essence of calculation" rests upon the Nothing, the wholly other than being. "Anxiety grants an experience of being as the other of all beings . . . supposing we do not hide from the silent voice which disposes us to the terror of the abyss".[31] Terror itself is related to a feeling Heidegger calls modesty, *Scheu*, which is to say a fear mingled with respect, which can very well be understood as "horror," provided it be understood more or less as sacred horror. The evocation of horror is close in fact to that of marveling at being. Horror appears linked to the extreme distress of thought in the face of completed metaphysics and the prodigious wandering that it foretells. In the climate of horror, there appears with brutal clarity the strangeness of being, still not yet thought, "horribly" forgotten: the terrible desert of a long transition.

Anxiety with respect to being, terror, requires to be sustained, even sharpened, and not to be experienced in a merely passive way. Whence the necessity of another mood, valor. "Valor recognizes in the abyss of terror the barely trodden field of being."[32] This valor is not a heroism of action, but a disposition of thought with respect to the history of being. It is the courage to recognize and confront the historical event of the absence of metaphysics, its collapse, which leaves no other fulcrum than anxiety. Anxiety is called "the permanent fulcrum" of valor as a capacity to withstand Nothingness. Another name for valor is *Verhaltenheit*, restraint: the capacity to refrain from rushing to blot out the experience of Nothingness, restraint from immediately giving a new name to being. "Restraint" is precisely, says the 1937–38 lecture, the blending of terror and modesty, which corresponds to the tonality of the thought that is to come.[33] The dominant tonality of the previous philosophy would be rather melancholy: the sadness attendant on the break between the sensible and the intelligible, or at last, in Nietzsche, the joy of cancelling that break.

According to these divers tonalities, thought is always that which is disposed and determined by being, and which, beyond any calculation and any logic,

responds to the unmasterable riddle. This response is first defined by Heidegger in the first version of the Afterword (1943) as *silent response* to the silent speech of being, implying "thanks" and offering, which is to say sacrifice (the word is resonant of piety), and gift in return. This flush of thankful acceptance, profoundly free, would be the "origin" of all human speech, and thus the silence of a mood composed of calm gratitude and anxious courage would be at the origin of thought. In the Afterword the most primordial thought remains close to the silence of being. Terror is the disposition which retains for the longest possible time the benefit, so to speak, of that muteness proper to anxiety. In terror, the relation to the abyss is maintained, without total muteness, in the form of "concern for the usage of language," "care given to speech," a "poverty" and a spareness of words. Only this obedience to the pre-verbal silence guarantees that thought thinks in proximity to being.

One may wonder, however, whether this tonality of terror and of valor is not more Nietzschean than Heideggerian, recalling Nietzsche's evocation of the terrifying fall into the void, into the abyss. For the terror that lays hold of the *foolish one* in paragraph 125 of *The Joyful Wisdom* concerns not only the murder of God, but the caving in of the ground, the loss of the land. "Woe to thee, if homesickness for the land overcome thee . . . when there is no longer any land!" (end of paragraph 124). "What have we done, in unchaining this earth from its sun? Whence is it rolling now? . . . Have we not thrown ourselves into a continuous fall? . . . Are we not straying as across an infinite nothingness? Do we not feel the breath of the void?" Anxiety and distress in the face of the absent ground, the withdrawal not only of the metaphysical foundation but of the earthly seat do not refer in Heidegger to a crime or taint on the part of man, but to an epochal destiny. The age of the "night of the world" is that in which the base of the world has crumbled into the abyss. This abyss is much more fearful than the bottom of a precipice lurking before us or the threat of the gaping gulf, says Heidegger; it is rather to be understood more radically as "the total absence of the foundation." The foundation is not only the principle, the *arche*, the logical and metaphysical basis, but *the Earth*.

> The foundation is the soil for a putting down of roots and a bringing to a stand. The age in which the foundation is missing is suspended in the abyss. Supposing that for this time of distress a turning be still in store, that turning can only come about if the world veers from bottom to top, and this clearly means if it turns, starting from the abyss. In the age of the night of the world, the abyss of the world must be experienced and endured.[34]

Again we find this tone of dread and courage. Terror gives courage.

Ultimately, it is not the abyss that is most to be dreaded, but the possibility that the abyss itself be covered over, and distress changed into an infinitely durable absence of distress, from which no essential mutation could any longer issue. "Long is the time of distress of the night of the world. . . . Then the indigent age no longer feels even its indigence."[35] The abyss and dread are still

conforting and encouraging in comparison to the greater danger: a mood of complete insensitivity to or forgetting of distress, a world in which the night would be hidden forever by the day of technology and its artificial light, permanently burning. The turning, which remains unaccomplished for lack of a mutation in the essence of technology; the coexistence of calculated distance and of the non-calculable proximity of things; the simultaneity of devastating Enframing and the saving Event, all these traits of the thought of the later Heidegger accord uneasily with a *unique* tonality of terror. It seems that the expectation of an "other history," even if its coming is uncertain, implies other moods than terror which is turned principally towards that which in the present has collapsed, obstructing the future.

Indeed, it is expectation, and more exactly "presentiment" which is designated in the later texts as belonging to divers fundamental climates of present and future thought. This plurality is essential in order to characterize the climate of a transitional period. In *What is Philosophy?* Heidegger emphasizes this: "What we are encountering [today] is uniquely this: different types of moods of thought."[36] Among the forms of contemporary moods he classifies not only hope and despair, but blind confidence in outworn principles and the coldness of planning rationality. As for releasement, the well-known "serenity" (*Gelassenheit*), it is not understood as a mood, but as *the very essence of thought*: letting being be.

How can thought come to itself, detach itself from calculating reason, free itself from the grasp of the will to will? Again, under the impetus and in the context of another fundamental climate which itself has several facets. The transmutation of the will into a resting from will comes only by waiting and patience, but more precisely by "patient nobility of heart" (*die langmutige Edelmut*). Thought is noble when it knows gratitude, knows how to give back to being what being has given to it; thought is patient when it knows how to await change in being and how to accompany it. In the word *Mut* there is at once heart, patience, and courage. The moods of thought are courageous in the sense of a nonheroic courage, but patient, "grateful," full of generosity. In a poem entitled *Instance* (*Instandigkeit*), published first in the dialogue that follows *Discourse on Thinking* and in the collection *Winke*, Heidegger links thought to the "heart" (*das denkende Herz*) and again subjects the very possibility of thought to these two conjoining moods, "patience" and "nobility", adding a third, "generosity": "Assign to your thinking heart the simple patience/of the one generosity/of a noble remembrance."[37]

The most enigmatic of these moods is "nobility." Nobility no doubt is the capacity to recognize provenance, ascendancy, place in the destiny of being. "What has provenance is noble," says the same text. But what is truly noble, as Nietzsche says, is what distinguishes itself in the self-affirming of itself, which does not need to be compared or call upon its letters of nobility. True nobility of thought sets itself beyond terror, for it has learned to "leave metaphysics to itself." Can we not see here a very clear turning of that purely historical mood, terror, towards one or more nonhistorical moods, such as "patient nobility" as the attunement to the region (*Gegnet*), gathered around the thing in its particularity. "All of the hisorical," says Heidegger, "rests in the region."[38]

3 History opens upon wonder and closes upon terror

Nevertheless, it is to the fundamental historical moods – notably that of the beginning of thought, astonishment, and that of the present period or of the transition to that possible "other beginning," terror, that Heidegger pays most attention in his last texts. Of individual anxiety, which in *Being and Time* seemed a necessary condition of access to authenticity for all Dasein of all periods, there is no longer any question in a text such as *What is Philosophy?* Does this mean that there is no longer any individual anxiety at the end of the history of being? Is it entirely reabsorbed into terror? But in that case it would seem that it could no longer fulfill the role of individuating power, which it played in *Being and Time*. Is it in the age of technology a sort of survival from the previous age, the age of the metaphysics of subjectivity? And is it thus perhaps destined to disappear, in as much as in Enframing there is no longer subject nor object? In other words, does anxiety belong only to one period, which would open with Pascalian *effroi* and go by way of Kierkegaard up to *Being and Time* and its Sartrian offshoots? The Greeks certainly did not experience anxiety, but only fright, the first affect of the tragic, for they did not think in terms of reflexivity and self-consciousness.

So let us return to the fundamental historical moods. In the lectures of 1937–38, we find fairly long expositions of these moods, without any allusion to anxiety. One passage sums up these expositions: "In astonishment, the fundamental mood of the first beginning, being comes for the first time to stand in its own form. In terror the basic tonality of the other beginning, there is unveiled, underneath all progressivism and all domination of being, the somber void of goallessness and flight from the first and ultimate decisions."[39]

Marveling at the unveiling of being, held in suspense, in visual stasis by the *eidos*, the *Gestalt*, the figure or visage of being, the Greeks for the first time named the as-such of all beings. That beings *might be*, in the constancy and disclosedness of form, ceaselessly escaping engulfment in non-being, this struck and dazzled them. In volume 45, Heidegger analyzes at length the multiple and complex aspects of that apparently simple mood (he finds thirteen of them!) and shows how the *astonishment*, the maintaining of the wonder in looking, contains the seed of the passing on to metaphysics. Suffice it here to retain three essential points in this description of wonder:

1 Wonder is an unsustainable seesawing back and forth between the habitual and the inhabitual;
2 it reaches its achievement in the specification of the questioning of being as such; and
3 corresponding to such a fundamental mood is a kind of suffering.

1 In wonder, the most familiar becomes the strangest. This strangeness leaves one disarmed. There is no explanation. Wonder makes one *experience* an aporia, an absence of way out, without there being any formulated aporia. Unable to dwell either in the most familiar, or see one's way through the strangest, wonder remains in a swinging back and forth "between two." This movement is

not a contented floating, but reveals a distress as well as a requirement to stop, to be stable. The very space of the swinging back and forth sketches out the total space of the opening. Thought emerges from mood when the latter reveals the *as such* : that it is being as a whole as such that is taken up in the seesawing.

2 From the requirement that the seesawing and the confusion between habitual and inhabitual cease, thought is brought to a *decision*. It must ask about the most habitual, so that this may appear as strange. It must seize and fix that which is accessible or inaccessible, manifest or not, in the open. Thought is *forced* to question (man is only astonished because he is amazed by being as such). The decision as to the limits of being, and questioning in general are events of thought *determined* by mood. The articulation of the question, says Heidegger, is the achievement of wonder. Philosophy, on the other hand, deals with this distress of not-having a way out *by repressing it*.

3 The "fulfillment of distress" means that the answer to astonishment is not itself a sort of indecisive floating or affective fusion with being, but a firm and decided position with respect to being as such. Whence the suffering, for one must be able to *sustain* the fundamental mood and answer it by an appropriate questioning. "Every meditation on being-as-such is essentially a suffering."[40] The undergoing of this suffering is situated "beyond" activity and passivity. It consists in taking onto oneself that overwhelming totality in which questioning is caught up. It consists in the capacity to be transformed by these questions. To suffer is to have the courage to seize that which is given, while being at the same time seized by it. To suffer is also to be able to await the opportune time for this seizing. To quote Hölderlin:

> For every thing needs to be seized,
> By a demi-god or by
> A man, according to the suffering . . .
>
> For he hates,
> That god who meditates,
> A premature upspringing.[41]

Under the heading of astonishment, does not Heidegger describe his own mood of expectation? For the Greek philosopher, he says, hardly knew how to "suffer." He quickly replaced wonder with curiosity, or the hunger to know. When philosophy is conceived of as a reign (the philosopher-kings), this is the sign that the original distress of wonder is lost, that the beginning has started to decline. The initial wonder has become alien to us. Heidegger seems no longer to believe, as he wrote at the end of *What is Metaphysics?*, that wonder and metaphysics itself are derived from anxiety and founded on the revelation of Nothingness in anxiety. The Greeks' wonder doubtless continues to determine us first through metaphysics, then science. But at the same time as these have been developing a knowledge of beings in their being, they have accustomed us to the exactness and certainty of forms and essences. The fundamental attunement has changed: the surprise and wonder of the Greeks has reversed itself to become Cartesian evidence and assurance. For us, the permanence of forms has become the habitual. Technology goes beyond even certainty. The will to will masters too

well the essence of a world totally *produced* to be able to experience its enigmatic emergence. How could it surprise itself? But there is more: the levelling of differences, notably between the near and the far, introduces a new tonality which is a new form of indifference or insensitivity, (the contemporary equivalent, says Heidegger, in *The Seven Hundred Years of Messkirch*, of boredom): the refusal of distress, technological security, whose postulated limit is *the absence of all mood*.

Would terror therefore, rather than horror of the abyss, be the supreme panic that seizes thought in the face of the growing insensitivity of our age? And yet terror is not – and still less is the panic of thought – the dominant tonality. It is as rare as anxiety, but just as crucial. *Terror slumbers*. Thus we must return ceaselessly to the profound analogy between terror and anxiety. Terror is anxiety about the caving in or the eclipse of epochal principles. Just as anxiety happens not as metamorphosis of the subject, but as the sudden placing of the world at a remove – the unreality of intra-world relations which until then had been taken for granted – just so, terror appears as the eclipse of the metaphysical truth which had been reigning until now, the onto-theological truth. Terror emerges from the return to the unsoundable and indeterminable character of being. Again deprived of an essential name that would be imposed, being becomes once more entirely enigmatic. Beings appear very rich, but they are "abandoned to what there is," given over to the emptiness of goal-less fabrications, to the nothingness of power or *Machenschaft*, of technological "machinery," whose nihilistic structure has the circularity of an eternal return.

Thus terror and distress, the distress of a possible "other beginning," are far from being universally perceived by the age itself. The distress in which we find ourselves is most often powerless to make itself heard as a *fundamental* attunement. Of course, there is always a vague, median tonality, but from this mood no thought can emerge. In fact, this mood is no more than the neutralized anxiety that reigns beneath the mask of security-making; it is the "distress of the absence of distress," the false certainty that one has the real "well in hand," that there is not on the whole any need for great disquiet.

Thus it appears that a fundamental attenement like astonishment or terror means at once a mood which calls one to think, and one which does not merely characterize an epoch, but which founds both an epoch and history itself. Nor does this mood merely respond to an epochal situation; far from it, it allows there to be an epoch and is the very source of epochality. "It is called a fundamental disposition or mood, because it transports the one it disposes into a domain upon and within which word, work, and action can be founded as things which come about and which history may initiate," writes Heidegger, apropos of astonishment.[42] Such a mood is temporalization of time and source of thought as well as source of history. This mood is not radically caught in history or floating above history as a "spirit of the times," but is the matrix in which being becomes epoch. As such, it seems to be situated both within and outside of history?

Is there not by this fact a "trans-epochal" privilege attached to anxiety, and that in several respects? If as terror (of the abyss of being), it remains – even if it does not pierce through – the background tonality of our age and of the thought of passage, it is the sole mood which, although it may be experienced in a wholly

subjective manner by its capacity to reveal the "self," does not reinstate the self-assurance of subjectivity. Nor is it the simple reflexive self-grasping of consciousness nor the dilution of subjectivity in the world. "In anxiety, 'we are in suspense'. . . . This is why it is not, finally, 'you' nor 'I' who is overtaken by a malaise, but a 'we.' Alone still present in the upsettingness of this suspense where one can hold onto nothing is the pure being 'there'."[43] The "we" translates the German *einem*: "someone." In anxiety the subject no longer knows who he is. He attends at his own deconstruction, so to speak. He is no longer a subject, but an indeterminate being who feels himself invaded by a disquieting strangeness. Anxiety makes manifest the dispossession of the transcendental faculties of man, because it marks a pause in the metaphysical race toward the ceaseless reinforcement of the human subject's powers. This experience of radical fragility and powerlessness forever leaves the human presence exposed to the breath of the abyss. No assurance given by logic or science can forearm us against this dispossession which means that "the deepest finitude is inaccessible to our freedom."[44]

The thought of mood marks the end of the philosophy of will and opens the era of expectation. Expectation of events not measurable, not chronologically nor even epochally situatable and perhaps already outside the history of being: "Original anxiety can at any moment awaken in being-there. For this it does not need an unheard-of event to awaken it. To the depth of its reign corresponds the meaninglessness of what may evoke it."[45] All anxiety is outside memory, outside sequence, outside tradition, and yet it is *transition*.

Mood gives birth to thought because it is the first experience of being, the first hearing of its voice. All thought begins by the test of a putting into situation, responds to a silent vocation. Now anxiety is *par excellence* this test of withdrawal from speech. Does not this withdrawal from speech place not only daily forgetting but also history itself in parentheses? Does not anxiety make us lose our foothold in the epochal world? This placing in parentheses of history causes the self as well as the totality of the age – and of ages and situations – to be seen as suspended possibles. "Anxiety will not suffer being opposed to joy, or to the privileged pleasure of a peaceful activity. It stands this side of such oppositions, in a secret alliance with the serenity and sweetness of creative aspiring."[46] Far from being contrary to serenity, far from being linked with subjectivist willfulness, anxiety maintains a profound affinity with letting-be. Revealing what metaphysics has forgotten, the Nothing, it sets upon the path of a post-metaphysical, hence post-historical relation with being, where thought is reborn, so to speak, from its zero degree.

NOTES

1 In paragraphs 29 and 50 of *Sein und Zeit*, hereafter *SZ*.
2 Notably in the lecture at Cerisy, *Was ist das die Philosophie?* (1955). Hereafter *W.Phil.*
3 Cf. *GA* 39, lecture of 1934–35, *Hölderlins Hymnen "Germanien" un "der Rhein."*
4 Cf. *GA* 45, lecture of 1937–38, *Grundfragen der Philosophie*.
5 *SZ*, p. 137

6 Its elaboration dates from 1930 to 1943.
7 *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*, chapter V, *Wegmarken* 2, p. 189, *Wegmarken* is hereafter *W.* (= *G.A.*)
8 *Entsprechung* is different from an *adequation*, or *homoiôsis*, for although it implies accord, it does not imply any mimesis. *Entsprechen* means speaking beginning with. With what? With a silence in language, a solicitation that leads to saying what until then had remained to be said.
9 *W*, p. 111.
10 *Was ist das die Philosophie?*, p. 37.
11 In German; but Heidegger advises elsewhere to translate *Stimmung*, in French at least, as "disposition."
12 Astonishment too subsists in our age, but no longer as fundamental or original disposition or mood.
14 *W*, p. 109 (my emphasis).
15 *SZ*, p. 221.
16 *SZ*, p. 248.
17 *GA*, 29/30, p. 102
18 See *SZ*, p. 138.
19 Ibid
20 Ibid, p. 135.
21 *GA*, 39, pp. 140–41 (my emphasis of *comes about*).
22 *WiM*, *W* p. 114.
23 *GA*, 45, p. 159.
24 Op.cit., pp. 152–4.
25 Op.cit., p. 160, cf. also p. 153: "the excess of a gift doubtless more difficult to bear than any loss."
26 *GA* 39, p. 141.
27 *GA* 45, p. 161.
28 Cf. *GA* 39, p. 223.
29 *GA* 45, p. 153.
30 Op.cit., p. 160.
31 *W*, pp. 306–7.
32 Ibid., p. 305.
33 *GA* 45, p. 2.
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35 *HW.*, p. 249.
36 *W i Ph*, p. 43.
37 *GA* 13, p. 65.
38 *GA* 13, p. 62.
39 Ibid., p. 197.
40 Ibid., p. 175
41 Hölderlin, *Aus dem Motivkreis der Titanen*, *SW* IV, p. 215.
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6

Heidegger on Gaining a Free Relation to Technology

Hubert L. Dreyfus

Introduction: What Heidegger Is Not Saying

In *The Question Concerning Technology* Heidegger describes his aim:

> We shall be questioning concerning technology, and in so doing we should like to prepare a free relationship to it.

He wants to reveal the essence of technology in such a way that "in no way confines us to a stultified compulsion to push on blindly with technology or, what comes to the same thing, to rebel helplessly against it."[1] Indeed, he claims that "When we once open ourselves expressly to the *essence* of technology, we find ourselves unexpectedly taken into a freeing claim."[2]

We will need to explain essence, opening, and freeing before we can understand Heidegger here. But already Heidegger's project should alert us to the fact that he is not announcing one more reactionary rebellion against technology, although many respectable philosophers, including Jürgen Habermas, take him to be doing just that; nor is he doing what progressive thinkers such as Habermas want him to do, proposing a way to get technology under control so that it can serve our rationally chosen ends.

The difficulty in locating just where Heidegger stands on technology is no accident. Heidegger has not always been clear about what distinguishes his approach from a romantic reaction to the domination of nature, and when he does finally arrive at a clear formulation of his own original view, it is so radical that everyone is tempted to translate it into conventional platitudes about the evils of technology. Thus Heidegger's ontological concerns are mistakenly assimilated to humanistic worries about the devastation of nature.

Those who want to make Heidegger intelligible in terms of current anti-technological banalities can find support in his texts. During the war he attacks consumerism:

> The circularity of consumption for the sake of consumption is the sole pro-

cedure which distinctively characterizes the history of a world which has become an unworld.[3]

And as late as 1955 he holds that:

> The world now appears as an object open to the attacks of calculative thought. . . . Nature becomes a gigantic gasoline station, an energy source for modern technology and industry.[4]

In this address to the Schwartzwald peasants he also laments the appearance of television antennae on their dwellings.

> Hourly and daily they are chained to radio and television. . . . All that with which modern techniques of communication stimulate, assail, and drive man—all that is already much closer to man today than his fields around his farmstead, closer than the sky over the earth, closer than the change from night to day, closer than the conventions and customs of his village, than the tradition of his native world.[5]

Such statements suggest that Heidegger is a Luddite who would like to return from the exploitation of the earth, consumerism, and mass media to the world of the pre-Socratic Greeks or the good old Schwartzwald peasants.

Heidegger's Ontological Approach to Technology

As his thinking develops, however, Heidegger does not deny these are serious problems, but he comes to the surprising and provocative conclusion that focusing on loss and destruction is still technological.

> All attempts to reckon existing reality . . . in terms of decline and loss, in terms of fate, catastrophe, and destruction, are merely technological behavior.[6]

Seeing our situation as posing a problem that must be solved by appropriate action turns out to be technological too:

> [T]he instrumental conception of technology conditions every attempt to bring man into the right relation to technology. . . . The will to mastery becomes all the more urgent the more technology threatens to slip from human control.[7]

Heidegger is clear this approach cannot work.

> No single man, no group of men, no commission of prominent statesmen, scientists, and technicians, no conference of leaders of commerce and industry, can brake or direct the progress of history in the atomic age.[8]

His view is both darker and more hopeful. He thinks there is a more dangerous

situation facing modern man than the technological destruction of nature and civilization, yet a situation about which something *can* be done—at least indirectly. The threat is not a *problem* for which there can be a *solution* but an ontological *condition* from which we can be *saved*.

Heidegger's concern is the human distress caused by the *technological understanding of being*, rather than the destruction caused by specific technologies. Consequently, Heidegger distinguishes the current problems caused by technology—ecological destruction, nuclear danger, consumerism, etc.—from the devastation that would result if technology solved all our problems.

> What threatens man in his very nature is the . . . view that man, by the peaceful release, transformation, storage, and channeling of the energies of physical nature, could render the human condition . . . tolerable for everybody and happy in all respects.[9]

The "greatest danger" is that

> the approaching tide of technological revolution in the atomic age could so captivate, bewitch, dazzle, and beguile man that calculative thinking may someday come to be accepted and practiced *as the only* way of thinking.[10]

The danger, then, is not the destruction of nature or culture but a restriction in our way of thinking—a leveling of our understanding of being.

To evaluate this claim we must give content to what Heidegger means by an understanding of being. Let us take an example. Normally we deal with things, and even sometimes people, as resources to be used until no longer needed and then put aside. A styrofoam cup is a perfect example. When we want a hot or cold drink it does its job, and when we are through with it we throw it away. How different this understanding of an object is from what we can suppose to be the everyday Japanese understanding of a delicate teacup. The teacup does not preserve temperature as well as its plastic replacement, and it has to be washed and protected, but it is preserved from generation to generation for its beauty and its social meaning. It is hard to picture a tea ceremony around a styrofoam cup.

Note that the traditional Japanese understanding of what it is to be human (passive, contented, gentle, social, etc.) fits with their understanding of what it is to be a thing (delicate, beautiful, traditional, etc.). It would make no sense for us, who are active, independent, and aggressive—constantly striving to cultivate and satisfy our desires—to relate to things the way the Japanese do; or for the Japanese (before their understanding of being was interfered with by ours) to invent and prefer styrofoam teacups. In the same vein *we* tend to think of politics as the negotiation of individual desires while the Japanese seek consensus. In sum the social practices containing an understanding of what it is to be a human self, those containing an interpretation of

what it is to be a thing, and those defining society fit together. They add up to an understanding of being.

The shared practices into which we are socialized, then, provide a background understanding of what counts as things, what counts as human beings, and ultimately what counts as real, on the basis of which we can direct our actions toward particular things and people. Thus the understanding of being creates what Heidegger calls a *clearing* in which things and people can show up for us. We do not produce the clearing. It produces us as the kind of human beings that we are. Heidegger describes the clearing as follows:

> [B]eyond what is, not away from it but before it, there is still something else that happens. In the midst of beings as a whole an open place occurs. There is a clearing, a lighting. . . . This open center is . . . not surrounded by what is; rather, the lighting center itself encircles all that is. . . . Only this clearing grants and guarantees to human beings a passage to those entities that we ourselves are not, and access to the being that we ourselves are.[11]

What, then, is the essence of technology, i.e., the technological understanding of being, i.e., the technological clearing, and how does opening ourselves to it give us a free relation to technological devices? To begin with, when we ask about the essence of technology we are able to see that Heidegger's question cannot be answered by defining technology. Technology is as old as civilization. Heidegger notes that it can be correctly defined as "a means and a human activity." He calls this "the instrumental and anthropological definition of technology."[12] But if we ask about the *essence* of technology (the technological understanding of being) we find that modern technology is "something completely different and . . . new."[13] Even different from using styrofoam cups to serve our desires. The essence of modern technology, Heidegger tells us, is to seek more and more flexibility and efficiency *simply for its own sake*. "[E]xpediting is always itself directed from the beginning . . . towards driving on to the maximum yield at the minimum expense."[14] That is, our only goal is optimization:

> Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering. Whatever is ordered about in this way has its own standing. We call it standing-reserve. . . .[15]

No longer are we subjects turning nature into an object of exploitation:

> The subject-object relation thus reaches, for the first time, its pure "relational," i.e., ordering, character in which both the subject and the object are sucked up as standing-reserves.[16]

A modern airliner is not an object at all, but just a flexible and efficient cog in the transportation system.[17] (And passengers are presumably not subjects but merely

resources to fill the planes.) Heidegger concludes: "Whatever stands by in the sense of standing-reserve no longer stands over against us as object."[18]

All ideas of serving God, society, our fellow men, or even our own calling disappear. Human beings, on this view, become a resource to be used, but more important to be enhanced—like any other.

> Man, who no longer conceals his character of being the most important raw material, is also drawn into this process.[19]

In the film *2001*, the robot HAL, when asked if he is happy on the mission, answers: "I'm using all my capacities to the maximum. What more could a rational entity desire?" This is a brilliant expression of what anyone would say who is in touch with our current understanding of being. We pursue the growth or development of our potential simply for its own sake—it is our only goal. The human potential movement perfectly expresses this technological understanding of being, as does the attempt to better organize the future use of our natural resources. We thus become part of a system which no one directs but which moves toward the total mobilization of all beings, even us. This is why Heidegger thinks the perfectly ordered society dedicated to the welfare of all is not the solution of our problems but the distressing culmination of the technological understanding of being.

What Then Can We Do?

But, of course, Heidegger uses and depends upon modern technological devices. He is no Luddite and he does not advocate a return to the pre-technological world.

> It would be foolish to attack technology blindly. It would be shortsighted to condemn it as the work of the devil. We depend on technical devices; they even challenge us to ever greater advances.[20]

Instead, Heidegger suggests that there is a way we can keep our technological devices and yet remain true to ourselves:

> We can affirm the unavoidable use of technical devices, and also deny them the right to dominate us, and so to warp, confuse, and lay waste our nature.[21]

To understand how this might be possible we need an illustration of Heidegger's important distinction between technology and the technological understanding of being. Again we can turn to Japan. In contemporary Japan a traditional, non-technological understanding of being still exists alongside the most advanced high-tech production and consumption. The TV set and the household gods share the same shelf—the styrofoam cup co-exists with the porcelain one. We can thus see that one can have technology without the technological understanding of being, so it be-

comes clear that the technological understanding of being can be dissociated from technological devices.

To make this dissociation, Heidegger holds, one must rethink the history of being in the West. Then one will see that although a technological understanding of being is our destiny, it is not our fate. That is, although our understanding of things and ourselves as resources to be ordered, enhanced, and used efficiently has been building up since Plato and dominates our practices, we are not stuck with it. It is not the way things have to be, but nothing more or less than our current cultural clearing.

Only those who think of Heidegger as opposing technology will be surprised at his next point. Once we see that technology is our latest understanding of being, we will be grateful for it. We did not make this clearing nor do we control it, but if it were not given to us to encounter things and ourselves as resources, nothing would show up *as* anything at all and no possibilities for action would make sense. And once we realize—in our practices, of course, not just in our heads—that we *receive* our technological understanding of being, we have stepped out of the technological understanding of being, for we then see that what is most important in our lives is not subject to efficient enhancement. This transformation in our sense of reality—this overcoming of calculative thinking—is precisely what Heideggerian thinking seeks to bring about. Heidegger seeks to show how we can recognize and thereby overcome our restricted, willful modern clearing precisely by recognizing our essential receptivity to it.

> [M]odern man must first and above all find his way back into the full breadth of the space proper to his essence. That essential space of man's essential being receives the dimension that unites it to something beyond itself . . . that is the way in which the safekeeping of being itself is given to belong to the essence of man as the one who is needed and used by being.[22]

But precisely how can we experience the technological understanding of being as a gift to which we are receptive? What is the phenomenon Heidegger is getting at? We can break out of the technological understanding of being whenever we find ourselves gathered by things rather than controlling them. When a thing like a celebratory meal, to take Heidegger's example, pulls our practices together and draws us in, we experience a focusing and a nearness that resists technological ordering. Even a technological object like a highway bridge, when experienced as a gathering and focusing of our practices, can help us resist the very technological ordering it furthers. Heidegger describes the bridge so as to bring out both its technological ordering function and its continuity with pre-technological things.

> The old stone bridge's humble brook crossing gives to the harvest wagon its passage from the fields into the village and carries the lumber cart from the field path to the road. The highway bridge is tied into the network of long-distance traffic, paced as calculated for maximum yield. Always and ever differently the bridge escorts the lingering and hastening ways of men to and fro. . . . The bridge *gathers* to itself in *its own way* earth and sky, divinities and mortals.[23]

Getting in sync with the highway bridge in its technological functioning can make us sensitive to the technological understanding of being as the way our current clearing works, so that we experience our role as receivers, and the importance of receptivity, thereby freeing us from our compulsion to force all things into one efficient order.

This transformation in our understanding of being, unlike the slow process of cleaning up the environment which is, of course, also necessary, would take place in a sudden Gestalt switch.

> The turning of the danger comes to pass suddenly. In this turning, the clearing belonging to the essence of being suddenly clears itself and lights up.[24]

The danger, when grasped as the danger, becomes that which saves us. "The selfsame danger is, when it is *as* the danger, the saving power."[25]

This remarkable claim gives rise to two opposed ways of understanding Heidegger's response to technology. Both interpretations agree that once one recognizes the technological understanding of being for what it is—a historical understanding—one gains a free relation to it. We neither push forward technological efficiency as our only goal nor always resist it. If we are free of the technological imperative we can, in each case, discuss the pros and cons. As Heidegger puts it:

> We let technical devices enter our daily life, and at the same time leave them outside . . . as things which are nothing absolute but remain dependent upon something higher [the clearing]. I would call this comportment toward technology which expresses "yes" and at the same time "no", by an old word, *releasement towards things.*[26]

One way of understanding this proposal—represented here by Richard Rorty—holds that once we get in the right relation to technology, viz. recognize it as a clearing, it is revealed as just as good as any other clearing. Efficiency—getting the most out of ourselves and everything else—is fine, so long as we do not think that efficiency for its own sake is the *only* end for man, dictated by reality itself, to which all others must be subordinated. Heidegger seems to support this acceptance of the technological understanding of being when he says:

> That which shows itself and at the same time withdraws [i.e., the clearing] is the essential trait of what we call the mystery. I call the comportment which enables us to keep open to the meaning hidden in technology, *openness to the mystery.* Releasement toward things and openness to the mystery belong

> together. They grant us the possibility of dwelling in the world in a totally different way. They promise us a new ground and foundation upon which we can stand and endure in the world of technology without being imperiled by it.[27]

But acceptance of the mystery of the gift of understandings of being cannot be Heidegger's whole story, for he immediately adds:

> Releasement toward things and openness to the mystery give us a vision of a new rootedness which *someday* might even be fit to recapture the old and now rapidly disappearing rootedness in a changed form.[28]

We then look back at the preceding remark and realize *releasement* gives only a "possibility" and a "promise" of "dwelling in the world in a totally different way."

Mere openness to technology, it seems, leaves out much that Heidegger finds essential to human being: embeddedness in nature, nearness or localness, shared meaningful differences such as noble and ignoble, justice and injustice, salvation and damnation, mature and immature—to name those that have played important roles in our history. *Releasement*, while giving us a free relation to technology and protecting our nature from being distorted and distressed, cannot give us any of these.

For Heidegger, there are, then, two issues. One issue is clear:

> The issue is the saving of man's essential nature. Therefore, the issue is keeping meditative thinking alive.[29]

But that is not enough:

> If releasement toward things and openness to the mystery awaken within us, then we should arrive at a path that will lead to a new ground and foundation.[30]

Releasement, it turns out, is only a stage, a kind of holding pattern, awaiting a new understanding of being, which would give some content to our openness—what Heidegger calls a new rootedness. That is why each time Heidegger talks of *releasement* and the saving power of understanding technology as a gift he then goes on to talk of the divine.

> Only when man, in the disclosing coming-to-pass of the insight by which he himself is beheld . . . renounces human self-will . . . does he correspond in his essence to the claim of that insight. In thus corresponding man is gathered into his own, that he . . . may, as the mortal, look out toward the divine.[31]

The need for a new centeredness is reflected in Heidegger's famous remark in his last interview: "Only a god can save us now."[32] But what does this mean?

The Need for a God

Just preserving pre-technical practices, even if we could do it, would not give us what we need. The pre-technological practices no longer add up to a shared sense of reality and one cannot legislate a new understanding of being. For such practices to give meaning to our lives, and unite us in a community, they would have to be focused and held up to the practitioners. This function, which later Heidegger calls "truth setting itself to work," can be performed by what he calls a work of art. Heidegger takes the Greek temple as his illustration of an artwork working. The temple held up to the Greeks what was important, and so let there be heroes and slaves, victory and disgrace, disaster and blessing, and so on. People whose practices were manifested and focused by the temple had guidelines for leading good lives and avoiding bad ones. In the same way, the medieval cathedral made it possible to be a saint or a sinner by showing people the dimensions of salvation and damnation. In either case, one knew where one stood and what one had to do. Heidegger holds that "there must always be some being in the open [the clearing], something that is, in which the openness takes its stand and attains its constancy."[33]

We could call such special objects cultural paradigms. A cultural paradigm focuses and collects the scattered practices of a culture, unifies them into coherent possibilities for action, and holds them up to the people who can then act and relate to each other in terms of the shared exemplar.

When we see that for later Heidegger only those practices focused in a paradigm can establish what things can show up as and what it makes sense to do, we can see why he was pessimistic about salvaging aspects of the Enlightenment or reviving practices focused in the past. Heidegger would say that we should, indeed, try to preserve such practices, but they can save us only if they are radically transformed and integrated into a new understanding of reality. In addition we must learn to appreciate marginal practices—what Heidegger calls the saving power of insignificant things—practices such as friendship, backpacking into the wilderness, and drinking the local wine with friends. All these practices are marginal precisely because they are not efficient. They can, of course, be engaged in for the sake of health and greater efficiency. This expanding of technological efficiency is the greatest danger. But these saving practices could come together in a new cultural paradigm that held up to us a new way of doing things, thereby focusing a world in which formerly marginal practices were central and efficiency marginal. Such a new object or event that grounded a new understanding of reality Heidegger would call a new god. This is why he holds that "only another god can save us."[34]

Once one sees what is needed, one also sees that there is not much we can do to bring it about. A new sense of reality is not something that can be made the goal of a

crash program like the moon flight—a paradigm of modern technological power. A hint of what such a new god might look like is offered by the music of the sixties. The Beatles, Bob Dylan, and other rock groups became for many the articulation of new understanding of what really mattered. This new understanding almost coalesced into a cultural paradigm in the Woodstock Music Festival, where people actually lived for a few days in an understanding of being in which mainline contemporary concern with rationality, sobriety, willful activity, and flexible, efficient control were made marginal and subservient to Greek virtues such as openness, enjoyment of nature, dancing, and Dionysian ecstasy along with a neglected Christian concern with peace, tolerance, and love of one's neighbor without desire and exclusivity. Technology was not smashed or denigrated but all the power of the electronic media was put at the service of the music which focused all the above concerns.

If enough people had found in Woodstock what they most cared about, and recognized that all the others shared this recognition, a new understanding of being might have coalesced and been stabilized. Of course, in retrospect we see that the concerns of the Woodstock generation were not broad and deep enough to resist technology and to sustain a culture. Still we are left with a hint of how a new cultural paradigm would work, and the realization that we must foster human receptivity and preserve the endangered species of pre-technological practices that remain in our culture, in the hope that one day they will be pulled together into a new paradigm, rich enough and resistant enough to give new meaningful directions to our lives.

To many, however, the idea of a god which will give us a unified but open community—one set of concerns which everyone shares if only as a focus of disagreement—sounds either unrealistic or dangerous. Heidegger would probably agree that its open democratic version looks increasingly unobtainable and that we have certainly seen that its closed totalitarian form can be disastrous. But Heidegger holds that given our historical essence—the kind of beings we have become during the history of our culture—such a community is necessary to us. This raises the question of whether our need for one community is, indeed, dictated by our historical essence, or whether the claim that we can't live without a centered and rooted culture is simply romantic nostalgia.

It is hard to know how one could decide such a question, but Heidegger has a message even for those who hold that we, in this pluralized modern world, should not expect and do not need one all-embracing community. Those who, from Dostoievsky, to the hippies, to Richard Rorty, think of communities as local enclaves in an otherwise impersonal society still owe us an account of what holds these local communities together. If Dostoievsky and Heidegger are right, each local community still needs its local god—its particular incarnation of what the community is up to. In that case we are again led to the view that releasement is not enough, and to the modified Heideggerian slogan that only some new *gods* can save us.

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Highway bridges and feasts: Heidegger and Borgmann on how to affirm technology *

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Abstract. Borgmann's views seem to clarify and elaborate Heidegger's. Both thinkers understand technology as a way of coping with people and things that reveals them, viz. makes them intelligible. Both thinkers also claim that technological coping could devastate not only our environment and communal ties but more importantly the historical, world-opening being that has defined Westerners since the Greeks. Both think that this devastation can be prevented by attending to the practices for coping with simple things like family meals and footbridges. But, contrary to Borgmann, Heidegger claims further that, alongside simple things, we can affirm technological things such as autobahn bridges. For Borgmann, technological coping produces things like central heating that are so dispersed they inhibit skillful interaction with them and therefore prevent our being sensitive to ourselves as world-disclosers. For Heidegger, so long as we can still relate to non-technological things, we can affirm relations with technological things because we can maintain both our technological and the non-technological *ways of world-disclosing*. So Borgmann sees revealing as primarily directed to things while Heidegger sees it as directed to worlds. If Heidegger is right about us, we have more leeway to save ourselves from technological devastation than Borgmann sees.

Albert Borgmann advances an American frontiersman's version of the question concerning technology that was pursued by Heidegger almost half a century ago among the peasants in the Black Forest. Since the *critique* of technology pioneered by these thinkers has by now become widely known, we would like to address a subsequent question with which each has also struggled. How can we relate ourselves to technology in a way that not only resists its devastation but also gives it a positive role in our lives? This is an extremely difficult question to which no one has yet given an adequate response, but it is perhaps *the* question for our generation. Through a sympathetic examination of the Borgmannian and Heidegerrian alternatives, we hope we can show that Heidegger suggests a more coherent and credible answer than Borgmann's.

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1. The essence of technology

In writing about technology, Heidegger formulates the goal we are concerned with here as that of gaining a free relation to technology – a way of living with technology that does not allow it to "warp, confuse, and lay waste our nature."[1] According to Heidegger our nature is to be world disclosers. That is, by means of our equipment and coordinated practices we human beings open coherent, distinct contexts or worlds in which we perceive, act, and think. Each such world makes possible a distinct and pervasive way in which things, people, and selves can appear and in which certain ways of acting make sense. The Heidegger of *Being and Time* called a world an understanding of being and argued that such an understanding of being is what makes it possible for us to encounter people and things as such. He considered his discovery of the ontological difference – the difference between the understanding of being and the beings that can show up given an understanding of being – his single great contribution to Western thought.

Middle Heidegger (roughly from the 1930s to 1950) added that there have been a series of total understandings of being in the West, each focused by a cultural paradigm which he called a work of art[2] He distinguished roughly six epochs in our changing understanding of being. First things were understood on the model of wild nature as *physis*, i.e. as springing forth on their own. Then on the basis of *poeisis*, or nurturing, things were dealt with as needing to be helped to come forth. This was followed by an understanding of things as finished works, which in turn led to the understanding of all beings as *creatures* produced by a creator God. This religious world gave way to the modern one in which everything was organized to stand over against and satisfy the desires of autonomous and stable subjects. In 1950, Heidegger claimed, that we were entering a final epoch which he called *the technological understanding of being.*

But until late in his development, Heidegger was not clear as to how technology worked. He held for a long time that the danger of technology was that man was dominating everything and exploiting all beings for his own satisfaction, as if man were a subject in control and the objectification of everything were the problem. Thus, in 1940 he says:

> Man is what lies at the bottom of all beings; and that is, in modern terms, at the bottom of all objectification and representability.[3]

To test this early claim we turn to the work of Albert Borgmann since he has given us the best account of this aspect of Heidegger's thinking. Rather than doing an exegesis of Heidegger's texts, Borgmann does just what Heidegger

wants his readers to do. He follows Heidegger on his path of thought, which always means finding the phenomena about which Heidegger is thinking. In *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life*, Borgmann draws attention to the phenomenon of the technological device. Before the triumph of technological devices, people primarily engaged in practices that nurtured or crafted various things. So gardeners developed the skills and put in the effort necessary for nurturing plants, musicians acquired the skill necessary for bringing forth music, the fire place had to be filled with wood of certain types and carefully maintained in order to provide warmth for the family. Technology, as Borgmann understands it, belongs to the last stage in the history of the understandings of being in the West. It replaces the worlds of *poiesis*, craftsmen, and Christians with a world in which subjects control objects. In such a world the things that call for and focus nurturing, craftsmanly, or praising practices are replaced by devices that offer a more and more transparent or commodious way of satisfying a desire. Thus the wood-burning fireplace as the foyer or focus of family activity is replaced by the stove and then by the furnace.

As Heidegger's thinking about technology deepened, however, he saw that even objects cannot resist the advance of technology. He came to see this in two steps. First, he saw that the nature of technology does not depend on subjects understanding and using objects. In 1946 he said that exploitation and control are not the subject's doing; "that man becomes the subject and the world the object, is a consequence of technology's nature establishing itself, and not the other way around."[4] And in his final analysis of technology, Heidegger was critical of those who, still caught in the subject/object picture, thought that technology was dangerous because it embodied instrumental reason. Modern technology, he insists, is "something completely different and therefore new."[5] The goal of technology Heidegger then tells us, is the more and more flexible and efficient ordering of resources, not as objects to satisfy our desires, but simply for the sake of ordering. He writes:

> Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering. Whatever is ordered about in this way . . . we call . . . standing-reserve. . . . Whatever stands by in the sense of standing reserve no longer stands over against us as object.[6]

Like late Heidegger, recent Borgmann sees that the direction technology is taking will eventually get rid altogether of objects. In his latest book, *Crossing the Postmodern Divide*, Borgmann takes up the difference between *modern* and *postmodern* technology. He distinguishes *modern hard* technology from

postmodern soft technology. On Borgmann's account, modern technology, by rigidity and control, overcame the resistance of nature and succeeded in fabricating impressive structures such as railroad bridges as well as a host of standard durable devices. *Postmodern* technology, by being flexible and adaptive, produces instead a diverse array of quality goods such as high-tech athletic shoes designed specifically for each particular athletic activity.

Borgmann notes that as our postmodern society has moved from production to service industries our products have evolved from sophisticated goods to information. He further sees that this postmodern instrumental reality is giving way in its turn to the hyperreality of simulators that seek to get rid of the limitations imposed by the real world. Taken to the limit the simulator puts an improved reality completely at our disposal. Thus the limit of postmodernity, as Borgmann understands it, would be reached, not by the total objectification and exploitation of nature, but by getting rid of natural objects and replacing them with simulacra that are completely under our control. The essential feature of such hyperreality on Borgmann's account is that it is "entirely subject to my desire."[7] Thus for Borgmann the *object* disappears precisely to the extent that the *subject* gains total control. But Borgmann adds the important qualification that in gaining total control, the postmodern subject is reduced to "a point of arbitrary desires."[8] In the end, Borgmann's postmodern hyperreality would eliminate both objects and modernist subjects who have long-term identities and commitments. Nevertheless, Borgmann still remains within the field of subjectivity by maintaining that hyperreality is driven by the satisfaction of desires.

Even though he wrote almost half a century ago, Heidegger already had a similar account of the last stage of modernity. Like Borgmann he saw that information is replacing objects in our lives, and Heidegger and Borgmann would agree that information's main characteristic is that it can be easily transformed. But, whereas Borgmann sees the goal of these transformations as serving a minimal subject's desires, Heidegger claims that "both the subject and the object are sucked up as standing-reserve."[9] To see what he means by this, we can begin by examining Heidegger's half-century-old example. Heidegger describes the hydroelectric power station on the Rhine as his paradigm technological device because for him electricity is the paradigm technological stuff. He says:

> The revealing that rules throughout modern technology has the character of a setting-upon, in the sense of a challenging-forth. That challenging happens in that the energy concealed in nature is unlocked, what is unlocked is transformed, what is transformed is stored up, what is stored up is, in turn, distributed, and what is distributed is switched about *ever anew*.[10]

But we can see now that electricity is not a perfect example of technological stuff because it ends up finally turned into light, heat, or motion to satisfy some subject's desire. Heidegger's intuition is that treating everything as standing reserve or, as we might better say, resources, makes possible *endless* disaggregation, redistribution, and reaggregation *for its own sake*. As soon as he sees that information is truly endlessly transformable Heidegger switches to computer manipulation of information as his paradigm."[11]

As noted, when Heidegger says that technology is not instrumental and objectifying but "something entirely new," he means that, along with objects, subjects are eliminated by this new mode of being. Thus for Heidegger postmodern technology is not the culmination of the modern subject's controlling of objects but a new stage in the understanding of being. Heidegger, standing on Nietzsche's shoulders, gains a glimpse of this new understanding when he interprets Nietzsche as holding that the will to power is not the will to gain control for the sake of satisfying one's desires – even arbitrary ones – but the tendency in the practices to produce and maintain flexible ordering so that the fixity of even the past can be conquered; this cashes out as flexible ordering for the sake of more ordering and reordering without limit, which, according to Heidegger, Nietzsche expresses as the eternal return of the same.[12] Thanks to Nietzsche, Heidegger could sense that, when everything becomes standing reserve or resources, people and things will no longer be understood as having essences or identities or, for people, the goal of satisfying arbitrary desires, but back in 1955 he could not yet make out just how such a world would look.

Now, half a century after Heidegger wrote *The Question Concerning Technology*, the new understanding of being is becoming evident. A concrete example of this change and of an old fashioned subject's resistance to it can be seen in a recent *New York Times* article entitled: "An Era When Fluidity Has Replaced Maturity" (March, 20th, 1995). The author, Michiko Kakutani, laments that "for many people . . . shape-shifting and metamorphosis seem to have replaced the conventional process of maturation." She then quotes a psychiatrist, Robert Jay Lifton, who notes in his book *The Protean Self* that "We are becoming fluid and many-sided. Without quite realizing it, we have been evolving a sense of self appropriate to the restlessness and flux of our time."[13] Kakutani then comments:

> Certainly signs of the flux and restlessness Mr. Lifton describes can be found everywhere one looks. On a superficial cultural level, we are surrounded by images of shape-shifting and reinvention, from sci-fi creatures who "morph" from form to form, to children's toys [she has in mind Transformers that metamorphose from people into vehicles]; from Madonna's ever expanding gallery of ready-to-wear personas to New Age mystics who claim they can "channel" other people or remember "previous" lives.[14]

In a quite different domain, in a talk at Berkeley on the difference between the modern library culture and the new information-retrieval culture, Terry Winograd notes a series of oppositions which, when organized into a chart, show the transformation of the Modern into the Postmodern along the lines that Heidegger described. Here are a few of the oppositions that Winograd found:

Library Culture	*Information-Retrieval Culture*
Careful selection: a. quality of editions b. perspicuous descriptions on cards to enable judgment c. authenticity of the text	Access to everything: a. inclusiveness of editions b. operational training on search engines to enable coping c. availability of texts
Classification: a. disciplinary standards b. stable, organized, defined by specific interests	Diversification: a. user friendliness b. hypertext – following all lines of curiosity
Permanent collections: a. preservation of a fixed text b. browsing	Dynamic collections: a. intertextual evolution b. surfing the web

It is clear from these opposed lists that more has changed than the move from control of objects to flexibility of storage and access. What is being stored and accessed is no longer a fixed body of objects with fixed identities and contents. Moreover, the user seeking the information is not a subject who desires a more complete and reliable model of the world, but a protean being ready to be opened up to ever new horizons. In short, the postmodern human being is not interested in collecting but is constituted by connecting.

The perfect postmodern artifact is, thus, the Internet, and Sherry Turkle has described how the net is changing the background practices that determine the kinds of selves we can be. In her recent book, *Life on the Screen: Identity, in the Age of the Internet*, she details "the ability of the Internet to change popular understandings of identity." On the Internet, she tells us, "we are encouraged to think of ourselves as fluid, emergent, decentralized, multiplicitous, and ever in process."[15] Thus "the Internet has become a significant social laboratory for experimenting with the constructions and reconstructions of self that characterize postmodern life."[16] Precisely what sort of identity does the Net encourage us to construct?

There seem to be two answers that Turkle does not clearly distinguish. She uses as her paradigm Net experience the MUD, which is an acronym for Multi-User Dungeon – a virtual space popular with adults that has its origin in a teenagers' role playing game. A MUD, she says, "can become a context for discovering who one is and wishes to be." Thus some people explore roles in order to become more clearly and confidently themselves. The Net then functions in the old subject/object mode "to facilitate self knowledge and personal growth."[18] But, on the other hand, although Turkle continues to use the out-dated, modernist language of personal growth, she sees that the computer and the Internet promote something totally different and new. "MUDs," she tells us, "make possible the creation of an identity so fluid and multiple that it strains the limits of the notion."[19] Indeed, the MUD's disembodiment and lack of commitment enables people to be many selves without having to integrate these selves or to use them to improve a single identity. As Turkle notes:

> In MUDs you can write and revise your character's self-description whenever you wish. On some MUDs you can even create a character that "morphs" into another with the command "morph."[20]

Once we become accustomed to the age of the Net, we shall have many different skills for identity construction, and we shall move around virtual spaces and real spaces seeking ways to exercise these skills, powers, and passions as best we can. We might imagine people joining in this or that activity with a particular identity for so long as the identity and activity are exhilarating and then moving on to new identities and activities. Such people would thrive on having no home community and no home sense of self. The promise of the Net is that we will all develop sufficient skills to do one kind of work with one set of partners and then move on to do some other kind of work with other partners. The style that would govern such a society would be one of intense, but short, involvements, and everything would be done to maintain and develop the flexible disaggregation and reaggregation of various skills and faculties. Desires and their satisfaction would give way to having the thrill of the moment.

Communities of such people would not seem like communities by today's standards. They would not have a core cadre who remained in them over long periods of time. Rather, tomorrow's communities would live and die on the model of rock groups. For a while there would be an intense effort among a group of people and an enormous flowering of talent and artistry, and then that activity would get stale, and the members would go their own ways, joining other communities.[21] If you think that today's rock groups are a special case, consider how today's businesses are getting much work done by

so-called hot groups. Notoriously, the Apple Macintosh was the result of the work of such group. More and more products are appearing that have come about through such efforts. In such a world not only fixed identities but even desiring subjects would, indeed, have been sucked up as standing reserve.

2. Heidegger's proposal

In order to explain Heidegger's positive response to technological things, we shall generalize Heidegger's description of the gathering power of mostly Black Forest things[22] by using Borgmann's American account of what he calls focal practices. We will then be in a position to see how, given their shared view of how things and their local worlds resist technology, Borgmann's understanding of technological practices as still enmeshed with subjectivity leads him to the conclusion that technological things cannot solicit focal practices, while Heidegger's account of postmodern technological practices as radically different from modern subject/object practices enables him to see a positive role for technological things, and the practices they solicit.

In "The Thing" (1949) and "Building Dwelling Thinking" (1951), Heidegger explores a kind of gathering that would enable us to resist postmodern technological practices. In these essays, he turns from the cultural gathering he explored in "The Origin of the Work of Art" (that sets up shared meaningful differences and thereby unifies an entire culture) to local gatherings that set up local worlds. Such local worlds occur around some everyday thing that temporarily brings into their own both the thing itself and those involved in the typical activity concerning the use of the thing. Heidegger calls this event a *thing thinging* and the tendency in the practices to bring things and people into their own, *appropriation*. Albert Borgmann has usefully called the practices that support this local gathering *focal practices*.[23] Heidegger's examples of things that focus such local gathering are a wine jug and an old stone bridge. Such things gather Black Forest peasant practices, but, as Borgmann has seen, the family meal acts as a focal thing when it draws on the culinary and social skills of family members and solicits fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, children, familiar warmth, good humor, and loyalty to come to the fore in their excellence, or in, as Heidegger would say, their ownmost.

Heidegger describes such focal practices in general terms by saying that when things thing they bring together earth and sky, divinities and mortals. When he speaks this way, his thinking draws on Holderlin's difficult poetic terms of art; yet, what Heidegger means has its own coherence so long as we keep the phenomenon of a thing thinging before us. Heidegger, thinking of the taken-for-granted practices that ground situations and make them matter to us, calls them *earth*. In the example of the family meal we have borrowed

from Borgmann, the grounding practices would be the traditional practices that produce, sustain, and develop the nuclear family. It is essential to the way these earthy practices operate that they make family gathering matter. For families, such dining practices are not simply options for the family to indulge in or not. They are the basis upon which all manifest options appear. To ground mattering such practices must remain in the background. Thus, Heidegger conceives of the earth as being fruitful by virtue of being withdrawing and hidden.

By *sky*, Heidegger means the disclosed or manifest stable possibilities for action that arise in focal situations.[24] When a focal situation is happening, one feels that certain actions are appropriate. At dinner, actions such as reminiscences, warm conversation, and even debate about events that have befallen family members during the day, as well as questions to draw people out are solicited. But, lecturing, impromptu combat, private jokes, and brooding silence are discouraged. What particular possibilities are relevant is determined by the situation itself.

In describing the cultural works of art that provide unified understandings of being, Heidegger was content with the categories of earth and world which map roughly on the thing's earth and sky. But when Heidegger thinks of focal practices, he also thinks in terms of *divinities*. When a focal event such as a family meal is working to the point where it has its particular integrity, one feels extraordinarily in tune with all that is happening, a special graceful ease takes over, and events seem to unfold of their own momentum – all combining to make the moment all the more centered and more a gift. A reverential sentiment arises; one feels thankful or grateful for receiving all that is brought out by this particular situation. Such sentiments are frequently manifested in practices such as toasting or in wishing others could be joining in such a moment. The older practice for expressing this sentiment was, of course, saying grace. Borgmann expresses a similar insight when, in speaking of a baseball game as attuning people, he says:

> Given such attunement, banter and laughter flow naturally across strangers and unite them into a community. When reality and community conspire this way, divinity descends on the game.[25]

Our sense that we did not and could not make the occasion a center of focal meaning by our own effort but rather that the special attunement required for such an occasion to work has to be granted to us is what Heidegger wants to capture in his claim that when a thing things the divinities must be present. How the power of the divinities will be understood will depend on the understanding of being of the culture but the phenomenon Heidegger describes is cross-cultural.

The fourth element of what Heidegger calls the fourfold is the *mortals*. By using this term, Heidegger is describing us as disclosers and he thinks that death primarily reveals our disclosive way of being to us. When he speaks of death, he does not mean demise or a medically defined death. He means an attribute of the way human practices work that causes mortals (later Heidegger's word for people who are inside a focal practice) to understand that they have no fixed identity and so must be ready to relinquish their current identity in order to assume the identity that their practices next call them into attunement with.[26] Of course, one needs an account of how such a multiplicity of identities and worlds differs from the morphing and hot groups we have just been describing. We will come back to this question shortly.

So far, following Borgmann, we have described the phenomenon of a thing thinging in its most glamorized form where we experience the family coming together as an integrated whole at a particular moment around a particular event. Heidegger calls this heightened version of a thing thinging a thing "shining forth."[27] But if we focus exclusively on the glamorized version, we can easily miss two other essential features of things that Heidegger attends to in "Building Dwelling Thinking." The first is that things thing even when we do not respond to them with full attention. For instance, when we walk off a crowded street into a cathedral, our whole demeanor changes even if we are not alert to it. We relax in its cool darkness that solicits meditativeness. Our sense of what is loud and soft changes, and we quiet our conversation. In general, we manifest and become centered in whatever reverential practices remain in our post-Christian way of life. Heidegger claims that things like bridges and town squares establish location and thereby thing even in ways more privative than our cathedral example. He seems to mean that so long as people who regularly encounter a thing are socialized to respond to it appropriately, their practices are organized around the thing, and its solicitations are taken into account even when no one notices.

Instead of cathedrals, Heidegger uses various sorts of bridges as examples of things thinging but not shining. His list of bridges includes a bridge from almost every major epoch in his history of the Western understandings of being. Heidegger's account could begin with the *physis* bridge – say some rocks or a fallen tree – which just flashes up to reward those who are alert to the offerings of nature. But he, in fact, begins his list with a bridge from the age of *poiesis*: "the river bridge near the country town [that] brings wagon and horse teams to the surrounding villages."[28] Then there is the bridge from high medieval times when being was understood as *createdness*. It "leads from the precincts of the castle to the cathedral square." Oddly enough there is no bridge from the subject/object days but Borgmann has leapt into the breach with magnificent accounts of the heroic effort involved in constructing railroad

bridges, and poets, starting with Walt Whitman, have seen in the massive iron structure of the Brooklyn bridge an emblem of the imposing power and optimism of America.[29] Such a modern bridge is solid and reliable but it is rigid and locks into place the locations it connects.

After having briefly and soberly mentioned the *poiesis* bridge, Heidegger redescribes it in the style of Black Forest kitsch for which he is infamous. "The old stone bridge's humble brook crossing gives to the harvest wagon its passage from the fields into the village and carries the lumber cart from the field path to the road." Passages like this one seem to support Borgmann's contention that "an inappropriate nostalgia clings to Heidegger's account"[30] and that the things he names are "scattered and of yesterday."[31] And it is true that Heidegger distrusts typewriters,[32] phonographs, and television.[33] Borgmann finds "Heidegger's reflections that we have to seek out pretechnological enclaves to encounter focal things . . . misleading and dispiriting."[34]

While Borgmann shares Heidegger's distrust of technological *devices*, he, nonetheless, sees himself as different from Heidegger in that he finds a positive place for what he calls technological *instruments* in supporting traditional things and the practices they focus. He mentions the way hi-tech running shoes enhance running,[35] and one might add in the same vein that the dishwasher is a transparent technological instrument that supports, rather than interferes with or detracts from, the joys of the "great meal of the day." Still, according to Borgmann, what gets supported can never be technological devices since such devices, by satisfying our arbitrary desires as quickly and transparently as possible, cannot focus our practices and our lives but only disperse them.[36]

But if there were a way that technological devices could thing and thereby gather us, then one could be drawn into a positive relationship with them without becoming a resource engaged in this disaggregation and reaggregation of things and oneself and thereby loosing one's nature as a discloser. Precisely in response to this possibility, Heidegger, while still thinking of bridges, overcomes his Black Forest nostalgia and suggests a radical possibility unexplored by Borgmann. In reading Heidegger's list of bridges from various epochs, each of which things inconspicuously "in its own way," no one seems to have noticed the last bridge in the series. After his kitschy remarks on the humble old stone bridge, Heidegger continues: "The highway bridge is tied into the network of long-distance traffic, paced as calculated for maximum yield."[37] Clearly Heidegger is thinking of the postmodern autobahn interchange, in the middle of nowhere, connecting many highways so as to provide easy access to as many destinations as possible. Surely, one might think, Heidegger's point is that such a technological artifact could not possibly thing. Yet Heidegger continues:

> Ever differently the bridge escorts the lingering and hastening ways of men to and fro . . . The bridge *gathers*, as a passage that crosses, before the divinities – whether we explicitly think of, and visibly *give thanks for*, their presence, as in the figure of the saint of the bridge, or whether that divine presence is hidden or even pushed aside.[38]

Heidegger is here following out his sense that different things thing with different modes of revealing, that is, that each "*gathers* to itself in *its own way* earth and sky, divinities and mortals."[39] Figuring out what Heidegger might mean here is not a question of arcane Heidegger exegesis but an opportunity to return to the difficult question we raised at the beginning: How can we relate ourselves to technology in a positive way while resisting its devastation of our essence as world disclosers? In Heidegger's terms we must ask, How can a technological artifact like the highway bridge, dedicated as it is to optimizing options, gather the fourfold? Or, following Borgmann's sense of the phenomenon, we can ask how could a technological device like the highway bridge give one's activity a temporary focus? Granted that the highway bridge is a flexible resource, how can we get in tune with it without becoming flexible resources ourselves? How can mortals morph?

To answer this question about how we can respond to technology as disclosers or mortals, we must first get a clear picture of exactly what it is like to be turned into resources responding to each situation according to whichever of our disaggregated skills is solicited most strongly. We can get a hint of what such optimizing of disaggregated skills looks like if we think of the relations among a pack of today's teenagers. When a group of teenagers wants to get a new CD, the one with the car (with the driving skills and capacity) will be most important until they get to the store; then the one with the money (with purchasing skills and capacity) will lead; and then when they want to play the CD, the one with the CD player (with CD playing skills and capacity) will be out front. In each moment, the others will coordinate themselves to bring out maximally whatever other relevant skills (or possessions) they have such as chatting pleasantly, carrying stuff, reading maps, tuning the car radio, making wisecracks, and scouting out things that could be done for free. Consequently, they will be developing these other skills too.

If people lived their whole lives in this improvising mode, they would understand themselves only in terms of the skills that made the most sense at the moment. They would not see themselves as having a coordinated network of skills, but only in being led by chance to exercise some skill or other. Hence, they would not experience themselves as satisfying desires so much as getting along adaptably. Satisfying a desire here and there might be some small part of that.

If we now turn back to the autobahn "bridge" example, we can see the encounter with the interchange as a chance to let different skills be exercised. So on a sunny day we may encounter a interchange outside of Freiburg as we drive to a meeting in town as soliciting us to reschedule our meeting at Lake Constance. We take the appropriate exit and then use our cellular phone to make sure others do the same.

We can begin to understand how Heidegger thinks we can respond to technological things without becoming a collection of disaggregated skills, if we ask how the bridge could gather the fourfold. What is manifest like the *sky* are multiple possibilities. The interchange connects anywhere to anywhere else – strictly speaking it does not even connect two banks. All that is left of *earth* is that it matters that there are such possibilities, although it does not matter that there are these specific ones. But what about the *divinities*? Heidegger has to admit that they have been pushed aside. As one speeds around a clover leaf one has no pre-modern sense of having received a gift. Neither is there a modern sense, such as one might experience on a solid, iron railroad bridge, that human beings have here achieved a great triumph. All one is left with is a sense of flexibility and excitement. One senses how easy it would be to go anywhere. If one is in tune with technological flexibility, one feels *lucky* to be open to so many possibilities.

We can see that for Heidegger the interchange bridge is certainly not the best kind of bridge but it does have its style, and one can be sensitive to it in the way it solicits. The next question is, whether in getting in tune with the thinging of the highway bridge one is turned into a resource with no stable identity and no world that one is disclosing or whether one still has some sense of having an identity and of contributing to disclosing. This is where Heidegger's stress on our being *mortals* becomes essential. To understand oneself as mortal means to understand one's identity and world as fragile and temporary and requiring one's active engagement. In the case of the highway bridge, it means that, even while getting in tune with being a flexible resource, one does not understand oneself as being a resource all the time and everywhere. One does not always feel pressured, for instance, to optimize one's vacation possibilities by refusing to get stuck on back roads and sticking to the interstates. Rather, as one speeds along the overpass, one senses one's mortality, namely that one has other skills for bringing out other sorts of things, and therefore one is never wholly a resource.[40]

We have just described what may seem to be a paradox. We have said that even a technological thing may gather together earth, sky, mortals, and maybe even divinities, which are supposed to be the aspects of practices that gather people, equipment, and activities into local worlds, with roles, habitual practices, and a style that provide disclosers with a sense of integrity or

centeredness. But technological things notoriously disperse us into a bunch of disaggregated skills with a style of flexible dispersion. So what could they gather into a local world? There is only one answer here. Neither equipment nor roles could be gathered, but the skills for treating ourselves as disaggregated skills and the world as a series of open possibilities are what are drawn together so that various dispersed skillful performances become possible.

But if we focus on the skills for dispersing alone, then the dangerous seduction of technology is enhanced. Because the word processor makes writing easy for desiring subjects and this ease in writing solicits us to enter discourses rather than produce finished works, the word processor attached to the Net solicits us to substitute it for pens and typewriters, thereby eliminating the equipment *and the skills* that were appropriate for modern subject/object practices. It takes a real commitment to focal practices based on stable subjects and objects to go on writing personal letters with a fountain pen and to insist that papers written on the word processor must reach an elegant finish. If the tendency to rely completely on the flexibility of technological devices is not resisted, we will be left with only one kind of writing implement promoting one style of practice, namely those of endless transformation and enhancement. Likewise, if we live our lives in front of our home entertainment centers where we can morph at will from being audiophiles to sports fans to distance learners, our sense of being mortals who can open various worlds and have various identities will be lost as we, indeed, become pure resources.[41]

Resistance to technological practices by cultivating focal practices is the primary solution Borgmann gives to saving ourselves from technological devastation. Borgmann cannot find anything more positive in technology – other than indulging in good running shoes and a Big Mac every now and then – because he sees technology as the highest form of subjectivity. It may fragment our identities, but it maintains us as desiring beings not world disclosers. In contrast, since Heidegger sees technology as disaggregating our identities into a contingently built up collection of skills, technological things solicit certain skills without requiring that we take ourselves as having one style of identity or another. This absence of identity may make our mode of being as world disclosers impossible for us. This would be what Heidegger calls the greatest danger. But this absence of an identity also allows us to become sensitive to the various identities we have when we are engaged in disclosing the different worlds focused by different styles of things. For, although even dispersive technological skills will always gather in some fashion as they develop, the role of mortals as active world disclosers will only be preserved if it is at least possible for the gathering of these background skills to be experienced as such. And this experience will only be possible in technology if one can shift back and forth between pre-technological identities

with their style of coping and a technological style. As such disclosers we can then respond to technological things as revealing one kind of world among others. Hence, Heidegger's view of technology allows him to find a positive relation to it, but only so long as we maintain skills for disclosing other kinds of local worlds. Freeing us from having a total fixed identity so that we may experience ourselves as multiple identities disclosing multiple worlds is what Heidegger calls technology's saving power.[42]

We have seen that for Heidegger being gathered by and nurturing non-technological things makes possible being gathered by technological things. Thus, living in a plurality of local worlds is not only desirable, as Borgmann sees, but is actually necessary if we are to give a positive place to technological devices. Both thinkers must, therefore, face the question that Borgmann faces in his recent book, as to how to live in a plurality of communities of focal celebration. If we try to organize our lives so as to maximize the number of focal worlds we dwell in each day, we will find ourselves teaching, then running, then making dinner, then clearing up just in time to play chamber music. Such a controlling approach will produce a subject that is always outside the current world, planning the next. Indeed such willful organization runs against the responsiveness necessary for dwelling in local worlds at all. But if, on the other hand, one goes from world to world fully absorbed in each and then fully open to whatever thing grabs one next, one will exist either as a collection of unrelated selves or as no self at all, drifting in a disoriented way among worlds. To avoid such a morphing or empty identities, one wants a life where engaging in one focal practice leads naturally to engaging in another – a life of affiliations such that one regularly is solicited to do the next focal thing when the current one is becoming irrelevant. Borgmann has intimations of such a life:

> Musicians recognize gardeners; horse people understand artisans. . . . The experience of this kinship . . . opens up a wider reality that allows one to refocus one's life when failing strength or changing circumstances withdraw a focal thing.[43]

Such a plurality of focal skills not only enables one to move from world to world; it gives one a sort of poly-identity that is neither the identity of an arbitrary desiring subject nor the rudderless adaptability of a resource.

Such a kinship of mortals opens new possibilities for relations among communities. As Borgmann says:

> People who have been captivated by music . . . will make music themselves, but they will not exclude the runners or condemn the writers. In

> fact, they may run and write themselves or have spouses or acquaintances who do. There is an interlacing of communities of celebration.[44]

Here, we suspect, we can find a positive place for technological devices. For there is room in such interconnecting worlds not only for a joyful family dinner, writing to a life-long friend, and attending the local concert but also for surfing on the Internet and happily zipping around an autobahn cloverleaf in tune with technology and glad that one is open to the possibilities of connecting with each of these worlds and many others.

But Borgmann does not end with his account of the interlacing of communities, which is where Heidegger, when he is thinking of things thinging, would end. Borgmann writes:

> To conclude matters in this way . . . would suppress a profound need and a crucial fact of communal celebration, namely religion. People feel a deep desire for comprehensive and comprehending orientation.[45]

Borgmann thinks that, fortunately, we postmoderns are more mature than former believers who excluded communities other than their own. Thus we can build a world that promotes both local worlds and a "community of communities" that satisfies everyone's need for comprehensiveness. To accept the view that our concerns form what Borgmann calls a *community of communities* is to embrace one, overarching understanding of being of the sort that Heidegger in his middle period hoped might once again shine forth in a unifying cultural paradigm. So we find that Borgmann, like middle Heidegger, entertains the possibility that "a hidden center of these dispersed focuses may emerge some day to unite them."[46] Moreover, such a focus would "surpass the peripheral ones in concreteness, depth, and significance."[47]

Heidegger's thinking until 1955, when he wrote "The Question Concerning Technology," was like Borgmann's current thinking in that for him preserving things was compatible with awaiting a single God.[48] Heidegger said as early as 1946 that the divinities were traces of the lost godhead.[49] But Heidegger came to think that there was an essential antagonism between a unified understanding of being and local worlds. Of course, he always realized that there would be an antagonism between the style set up by a cultural paradigm and things that could only be brought out in their ownness in a style different from the dominant cultural style. Such things would inevitably be dispersed to the margins of the culture. There, as Borgmann so well sees, they will shine in contrast to the dominant style but will have to resist being considered irrelevant or even wicked.[50] But, if there is a single understanding of being, even those things that come into their own in the dominant cultural style will be inhibited as things. Already in his "Thing" essay Heidegger goes out of his

way to point out that, even though the original meaning of 'thing' in German is a gathering to discuss a matter of concern to the community, in the case of the thing thinging, the gathering in question must be self contained. The focal occasion must determine which community concerns are relevant rather than the reverse.[51]

Given the way local worlds establish their own internal coherence that resists any imposition from outside there is bound to be a tension between the glorious cultural paradigm that establishes an understanding of being for a whole culture and the humble inconspicuous things. The shining of one would wash out the shining of the others. The tendency toward one unified world would impede the gathering of local worlds. Given this tension, in a late seminar Heidegger abandoned what he had considered up to then his crucial contribution to philosophy, the notion of a single understanding of being and its correlated notion of the ontological difference between being and beings. He remarks that "from the perspective of appropriation [the tendency in the practices to bring things out in their ownmost] it becomes necessary to free thinking from the ontological difference." He continues, "From the perspective of appropriation, [letting-presence] shows itself as the relation of world and thing, a relation which could in a way be understood as the relation of being and beings. But then its peculiar quality would be lost."[52] What presumably would be lost would be the self-enclosed local character of worlds focused by things thinging. It follows that, as mortal disclosers of worlds in the plural, the only integrity we can hope to achieve is our openness to dwelling in many worlds and the capacity to move among them. Only such a capacity allows us to accept Heidegger's and Borgmann's criticism of technology and still have Heidegger's genuinely positive relationship to technological things.

Notes

1. Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund, (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) 54.
2. Heidegger's main example of cultural paradigms are works of art, but he does allow that there can be other kinds of paradigm. Truth, or the cultural paradigm, can also establish itself through the actions of a god, a statesman, or a thinker.
3. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol. 4, (New York: Harper & Row, 1982) 28.
4. Martin Heidegger, "What are Poets For?" *Poetry, Language, Thought*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1971) 112.
5. Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977) 5.
6. Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" 17.
7. Albert Borgmann, *Crossing the Postmodern Divide*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992) 88.
8. Borgmann, *Crossing* 108.

9. Martin Heidegger, "Science and Reflection", *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* 173.
10. Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" 16 (emphasis ours).
11. See Martin Heidegger, "On the Way to Language" (1959), trans. Peter D. Hertz *On the Way to Language* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971) 132. See also Martin Heidegger, "Memorial Address" (1959), *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper, 1966) 46.
12. Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking*?, trans. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968) 104–109.
13. Robert Jay Lifton as quoted by Michiko Kakutani, "When Fluidity Replaces Maturity", *New York Times*, 20 March 1995, C 11.
14. Michiko Kakutani, "When Fluidity Replaces Maturity."
15. Sherry Turkle, *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995) 263–264.
16. Turkle, 180.
17. Turkle, 180.
18. Turkle, 185.
19. Turkle, 12.
20. Turkle, 192.
21. In his account of brief habits, Nietzsche describes a life similar to moving from one hot group to another. Brief habits are neither like long-lasting habits that produce stable identities, nor like constant improvisation. For Nietzsche, the best life occurs when one is fully committed to acting out of one brief habit until it becomes irrelevant and another takes over. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974) §295, 236–237.
22. Martin Heidegger, "The Thing," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 182.
23. Albert Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) 196–210.
24. Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking", *Poetry, Language, Thought* 149.
25. Borgmann, *Crossing the Postmodern Divide* 135.
26. Heidegger, "The Thing", *Poetry, Language, Thought* 178–179.
27. Heidegger, "The Thing" 182.
28. Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking" 152.
29. Borgmann, *Crossing the Postmodern Divide*, 27–34.
30. Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life* 196.
31. Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life* 199.
32. Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. Andre Schuwer and Richard Rojecewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992) 85.
33. See Footnote #41.
34. Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life* 200.
35. Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life* 221.
36. In an attempt to overcome the residual nostalgia in any position that holds that technological devices can never have a centering role in a meaningful life, Robert Pirsig has argued in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* that, if properly understood and maintained, technological devices can focus practices that enable us to live in harmony with technology. Although the motorcycle is a technological device, understanding and caring for it can help one to resist the modern tendency to use whatever is at hand as a commodity to satisfy one's desires and then dispose of it. But, as Borgmann points out, this saving stance of understanding and maintenance is doomed as our devices, for example computers, become more and more reliable while being constructed of such minute and complex parts that understanding and repairing them is no longer an option.
37. Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking" 152.
38. Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking" 152–153.
39. Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking" 153.

40. If we take the case of writing implements, we can more clearly see both the positive role that can be played by technological things as well as the special danger they present to which Borgmann has made us sensitive. Like bridges, the style of writing implements reflects their place in the history of being. The fountain pen solicits us to write to someone for whom the personality of our handwriting will make a difference. When involved in the practices that make the fountain pen seem important, we care about such matters as life plans, stable identities, character, views of the world, and so on. We are subjects dealing with other subjects. A typewriter, however, will serve us better if we are recording business matters or writing factual reports simply to convey information. A word processor hooked up to the Net with its great flexibility solicits us to select from a huge number of options in order to produce technical or scholarly papers that enter a network of conversations. And using a word processor one cannot help but feel lucky that one does not have to worry about erasing, retyping, literally cutting and pasting to move text around, and mailing the final product. But, as Borgmann points out, a device is not neutral; it affects the possibilities that show up for us. If one has a word processor and a modem, the text no longer appears to be a piece of work that one finishes and then publishes. It evolves through many drafts none of which is final. Circulating texts on the net is the culmination of the dissolution of the finished object, where different versions (of what would have before been called a single text), are contributed to by many people. With such multiple contributions, not only is the physical work dispersed but so is the author. Such authorial dispersion is a part of the general dispersion of identity that Sherry Turkle describes.
41. Heidegger writes in "The Thing":

> Man . . . now receives instant information, by radio, of events which he formerly learned about only years later, if at all. The germination and growth of plants, which remained hidden throughout the seasons, is now exhibited publicly in a minute, on film. Distant sites of the most ancient cultures are shown on film as if they stood this very moment amidst today's street traffic. . . . The peak of this abolition of every possibility of remoteness is reached by television, which will soon pervade and dominate the whole machinery of communication. (165)

42. Martin Heidegger, "The Turning," *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* 43, where Heidegger claims that our turning away from a technological understanding of being will, at least initially, be a matter of turning to multiple worlds where things thing.
43. Borgmann, *Crossing the Postmodern Divide* 122.
44. Borgmann, *Crossing the Postmodern Divide* 141.
45. Borgmann, *Crossing the Postmodern Divide* 144.
46. Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life* 199.
47. Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life* 218.
48. Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" 33–35.
49. Heidegger, "What are Poets For?" 97.
50. Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life*, 212.
51. To put this in terms of meals, we can remember that in Virginia Wolfe's *To the Lighthouse* arguments about politics brought in from outside almost ruin Mrs. Ramsey's family dinner which only works when the participants become so absorbed in the food that they stop paying attention to external concerns and get in tune with the actual occasion. The same thing happens in the film *Babette's Feast*. The members of an ascetic religious community go into the feast resolved to be true to their dead founder's principles and not to enjoy the food. Bickering and silence ensues until the wine and food makes them forget their founder's concerns and attunes them to the past and present relationships that are in accord with the gathering.
52. Martin Heidegger, "Summary of a Seminar on the Lecture 'Time and Being,' " *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1972) 37.

23 Focal Things and Practices

To see that the force of nature can be encountered analogously in many other places, we must develop the general notions of focal things and practices. This is the first point of this chapter. The Latin word *focus*, its meaning and etymology, are our best guides to this task. But once we have learned tentatively to recognize the instances of focal things and practices in our midst, we must acknowledge their scattered and inconspicuous character too. Their hidden splendor comes to light when we consider Heidegger's reflections on simple and eminent things. But an inappropriate nostalgia clings to Heidegger's account. It can be dispelled, so I will argue, when we remember and realize more fully that the technological environment heightens rather than denies the radiance of genuine focal things and when we learn to understand that focal things require a practice to prosper within. These points I will try to give substance in the subsequent parts of this chapter by calling attention to the focal concerns of running and of the culture of the table.

The Latin word *focus* means hearth. We came upon it in Chapter 9 where the device paradigm was first delineated and where the hearth or fireplace, a thing, was seen as the counterpart to the central heating plant, a device. It was pointed out that in a pretechnological house the fireplace constituted a center of warmth, of light, and of daily practices. For the Romans the *focus* was holy, the place where the housegods resided. In ancient Greece, a baby was truly joined to the family and household when it was carried about the hearth and placed before it. The union of a Roman marriage was sanctified at the hearth. And at least in the early periods the dead were buried by the hearth. The family ate by the hearth and made sacrifices to the housegods before and after the meal. The hearth sustained, ordered, and centered house and family.[1] Reflections of the hearth's significance can yet be seen in the fireplace of many American homes. The fireplace often has a central location in the house. Its fire is now symbolical since it rarely furnishes sufficient warmth. But the radiance, the sounds, and the fragrance of living fire consuming logs that are split, stacked, and felt in their grain have retained their force. There are no longer images of the ancestral gods placed by the fire; but there often are pictures of loved ones on or above the mantel, precious things of the family's history, or a clock, measuring time.[2]

The symbolical center of the house, the living room with the fireplace, often seems forbidding in comparison with the real center, the kitchen with its inviting smells and sounds. Accordingly, the architect Jeremiah Eck has rearranged homes to give them back a hearth, "a place of warmth and activity" that encompasses cooking, eating, and living and so is central to the house whether it literally has a fireplace or not.[3] Thus we can satisfy, he says, "the need for a place of focus in our family lives."[4]

"Focus," in English, is now a technical term of geometry and optics. Johannes Kepler was the first so to use it, and he probably drew on the then already current sense of focus as the "burning point of lens or mirror."[5] Correspondingly, an optic or geometric focus is a point where lines or rays converge or from which they diverge in a regular or lawful way. Hence "focus" is used as a verb in optics to denote moving an object in relation to a lens or modifying a combination of lenses in relation to an object so that a clear and well-defined image is produced.

These technical senses of "focus" have happily converged with the original one in ordinary language. Figuratively they suggest that a focus gathers the relations of its context and radiates into its surroundings and informs them. To focus on something or to bring it into focus is to make it central, clear, and articulate. It is in the context of these historical and living senses of "focus" that I want to speak of focal things and practices. Wilderness on this continent, it now appears, is a focal thing. It provides a center of orientation; when we bring the surrounding technology into it, our relations to technology become clarified and well-defined. But just how strong its gathering and radiating force is requires further reflection. And surely there will be other focal things and practices: music, gardening, the culture of the table, or running.

We might in a tentative way be able to see these things as focal; what we see more clearly and readily is how inconspicuous, homely, and dispersed they are. This is in stark contrast to the focal things of pretechnological times, the Greek temple or the medieval cathedral that we have mentioned before. Martin Heidegger was deeply impressed by the orienting force of the Greek temple. For him, the temple not only gave a center of meaning to its world but had orienting power in the strong sense of first originating or establishing the world, of disclosing the world's essential dimensions and criteria.[6] Whether the thesis so extremely put is defensible or not, the Greek temple was certainly more than a self-sufficient architectural sculpture, more than a jewel of well-articulated and harmoniously balanced elements, more, even, than a shrine for the image of the goddess or the god. As Vincent Scully has shown, a temple or a temple precinct gathered and disclosed the land in which they were situated. The divinity of land and sea was focused in the temple.[7]

To see the work of art as the focus and origin of the world's meaning was a pivotal discovery for Heidegger. He had begun in the modern tradition of Western philosophy where, as suggested in the first chapter of this book, the

sense of reality is to be grasped by determining the antecedent and controlling conditions of all there is (the *Bedingungen der Möglichkeit* as Immanuel Kant has it). Heidegger wanted to outdo this tradition in the radicality of his search for the fundamental conditions of being. Perhaps it was the relentlessness of his pursuit that disclosed the ultimate futility of it. At any rate, when the universal conditions are explicated in a suitably general and encompassing way, what truly matters still hangs in the balance because everything depends on how the conditions come to be actualized and instantiated.[8] The preoccupation with antecedent conditions not only leaves this question unanswered; it may even make it inaccessible by leaving the impression that, once the general and fundamental matters are determined, nothing of consequence remains to be considered. Heidegger's early work, however, already contained the seeds of its overcoming. In his determination to grasp reality in its concreteness, Heidegger had found and stressed the inexorable and unsurpassable givenness of human existence, and he had provided analyses of its pretechnological wholeness and its technological distraction though the significance of these descriptions for technology had remained concealed to him.[9] And then he discovered that the unique event of significance in the singular work of art, in the prophet's proclamation, and in the political deed was crucial. This insight was worked out in detail with regard to the artwork. But in an epilogue to the essay that develops this point, Heidegger recognized that the insight comes too late. To be sure, our time has brought forth admirable works of art. "But," Heidegger insists, "the question remains: is art still an essential and necessary way in which that truth happens which is decisive for historical existence, or is art no longer of this character?"[10]

Heidegger began to see technology (in his more or less substantive sense) as the force that has eclipsed the focusing powers of pretechnological times. Technology becomes for him, as mentioned at the end of Chapter 8, the final phase of a long metaphysical development. The philosophical concern with the conditions of the possibility of whatever is now itself seen as a move into the oblivion of what finally matters. But how are we to recover orientation in the oblivious and distracted era of technology when the great embodiments of meaning, the works of art, have lost their focusing power? Amidst the complication of conditions, of the *Bedingungen,* we must uncover the simplicity of things, of the *Dinge*.[11] A jug, an earthen vessel from which we pour wine, is such a thing. It teaches us what it is to hold, to offer, to pour, and to give. In its clay, it gathers for us the earth as it does in containing the wine that has grown from the soil. It gathers the sky whose rain and sun are present in the wine. It refreshes and animates us in our mortality. And in the libation it acknowledges and calls on the divinities. In these ways the thing (in agreement with its etymologically original meaning) gathers and discloses what Heidegger calls the fourfold, the interplay of the crucial dimensions of earth and sky, mortals and divinities.[12] A thing, in Heidegger's eminent sense,

is a focus; to speak of focal things is to emphasize the central point twice.

Still, Heidegger's account is but a suggestion fraught with difficulties. When Heidegger described the focusing power of the jug, he might have been thinking of a rural setting where wine jugs embody in their material, form, and craft a long and local tradition; where at noon one goes down to the cellar to draw a jug of table wine whose vintage one knows well; where at the noon meal the wine is thoughtfully poured and gratefully received.[13] Under such circumstances, there might be a gathering and disclosure of the fourfold, one that is for the most part understood and in the background and may come to the fore on festive occasions. But all of this seems as remote to most of us and as muted in its focusing power as the Parthenon or the Cathedral of Chartres. How can so simple a thing as a jug provide that turning point in our relation to technology to which Heidegger is looking forward? Heidegger's proposal for a reform of technology is even more programmatic and terse than his analysis of technology.[14] Both, however, are capable of fruitful development.[15] Two points in Heidegger's consideration of the turn of technology must particularly be noted. The first serves to remind us of arguments already developed which must be kept in mind if we are to make room for focal things and practices. Heidegger says, broadly paraphrased, that the orienting force of simple things will come to the fore only as the rule of technology is raised from its anonymity, is disclosed as the orthodoxy that heretofore has been taken for granted and allowed to remain invisible.[16] As long as we overlook the tightly patterned character of technology and believe that we live in a world of endlessly open and rich opportunities, as long as we ignore the definite ways in which we, acting technologically, have worked out the promise of technology and remain vaguely enthralled by that promise, so long simple things and practices will seem burdensome, confining, and drab. But if we recognize the central vacuity of advanced technology, that emptiness can become the opening for focal things. It works both ways, of course. When we see a focal concern of ours threatened by technology, our sight for the liabilities of mature technology is sharpened.

A second point of Heidegger's is one that we must develop now. The things that gather the fourfold, Heidegger says, are inconspicuous and humble. And when we look at his litany of things, we also see that they are scattered and of yesterday: jug and bench, footbridge and plow, tree and pond, brook and hill, heron and deer, horse and bull, mirror and clasp, book and picture, crown and cross.[17] That focal things and practices are inconspicuous is certainly true; they flourish at the margins of public attention. And they have suffered a diaspora; this too must be accepted, at least for now. That is not to say that a hidden center of these dispersed focuses may not emerge some day to unite them and bring them home. But it would clearly be a forced growth to proclaim such a unity now. A reform of technology that issues from focal concerns will be radical not in imposing a new and unified master plan on the tech-

nological universe but in discovering those sources of strength that will nourish principled and confident beginnings, measures, i.e., which will neither rival nor deny technology.

But there are two ways in which we must go beyond Heidegger. One step in the first direction has already been taken. It led us to see in the preceding chapter that the simple things of yesterday attain a new splendor in today's technological context. The suggestion in Heidegger's reflections that we have to seek out pretechnological enclaves to encounter focal things is misleading and dispiriting. Rather we must see any such enclave itself as a focal thing heightened by its technological context. The turn to things cannot be a setting aside and even less an escape from technology but a kind of affirmation of it. The second move beyond Heidegger is in the direction of practice, into the social and, later, the political situation of focal things.[18] Though Heidegger assigns humans their place in the fourfold when he depicts the jug in which the fourfold is focused, we scarcely see the hand that holds the jug, and far less do we see of the social setting in which the pouring of the wine comes to pass. In his consideration of another thing, a bridge, Heidegger notes the human ways and works that are gathered and directed by the bridge.[19] But these remarks too present practices from the viewpoint of the focal thing. What must be shown is that focal things can prosper in human practices only. Before we can build a bridge, Heidegger suggests, we must be able to dwell.[20] But what does that mean concretely?

The consideration of the wilderness has disclosed a center that stands in a fruitful counterposition to technology. The wilderness is beyond the procurement of technology, and our response to it takes us past consumption. But it also teaches us to accept and to appropriate technology. We must now try to discover if such centers of orientation can be found in greater proximity and intimacy to the technological everyday life. And I believe they can be found if we follow up the hints that we have gathered from and against Heidegger, the suggestions that focal things seem humble and scattered but attain splendor in technology if we grasp technology properly, and that focal things require a practice for their welfare. Running and the culture of the table are such focal things and practices. We have all been touched by them in one way or another. If we have not participated in a vigorous or competitive run, we have certainly taken walks; we have felt with surprise, perhaps, the pleasure of touching the earth, of feeling the wind, smelling the rain, of having the blood course through our bodies more steadily. In the preparation of a meal we have enjoyed the simple tasks of washing leaves and cutting bread; we have felt the force and generosity of being served a good wine and homemade bread. Such experiences have been particularly vivid when we came upon them after much sitting and watching indoors, after a surfeit of readily available snacks and drinks. To encounter a few simple things was liberating and invigorating. The normal clutter and distraction fall away when, as the poet says,

there, in limpid brightness shine,
on the table, bread and wine.[21]

If such experiences are deeply touching, they are fleeting as well. There seems to be no thought or discourse that would shelter and nurture such events; not in politics certainly, nor in philosophy where the prevailing idiom sanctions and applies equally to lounging and walking, to Twinkies, and to bread, the staff of life. But the reflective care of the good life has not withered away. It has left the profession of philosophy and sprung up among practical people. In fact, there is a tradition in this country of persons who are engaged by life in its concreteness and simplicity and who are so filled with this engagement that they have reached for the pen to become witnesses and teachers, speakers of deictic discourse. Melville and Thoreau are among the great prophets of this tradition. Its present health and extent are evident from the fact that it now has no overpowering heroes but many and various more or less eminent practitioners. Their work embraces a spectrum between down-to-earth instruction and soaring speculation. The span and center of their concerns vary greatly. But they all have their mooring in the attention to tangible and bodily things and practices, and they speak with an enthusiasm that is nourished by these focal concerns. Pirsig's book is an impressive and troubling monument in this tradition, impressive in the freshness of its observations and its pedagogical skill, troubling in its ambitious and failing efforts to deal with the large philosophical issues. Norman Maclean's *A River Runs through It* can be taken as a fly-fishing manual, a virtue that pleases its author.[22] But it is a literary work of art most of all and a reflection on technology inasmuch as it presents the engaging life, both dark and bright, from which we have so recently emerged. Colin Fletcher's treatise of *The Complete Walker* is most narrowly a book of instruction about hiking and backpacking.[23] The focal significance of these things is found in the interstices of equipment and technique; and when the author explicitly engages in deictic discourse he has "an unholy awful time" with it.[24] Roger B. Swain's contemplation of gardening in *Earthly Pleasures* enlightens us in cool and graceful prose about the scientific basis and background of what we witness and undertake in our gardens.[25] Philosophical significance enters unbidden and easily in the reflections on time, purposiveness, and the familiar. Looking at these books, I see a stretch of water that extends beyond my vision, disappearing in the distance. But I can see that it is a strong and steady stream, and it may well have parts that are more magnificent than the ones I know.[26]

To discover more clearly the currents and features of this, the other and more concealed, American mainstream, I take as witnesses two books where enthusiasm suffuses instruction vigorously, Robert Farrar Capon's *The Supper of the Lamb* and George Sheehan's *Running and Being*.[27] Both are centered on focal events, the great run and the great meal. The great run, where one

exults in the strength of one's body, in the ease and the length of the stride, where nature speaks powerfully in the hills, the wind, the heat, where one takes endurance to the breaking point, and where one is finally engulfed by the good will of the spectators and the fellow runners.[28] The great meal, the long session as Capon calls it, where the guests are thoughtfully invited, the table has been carefully set, where the food is the culmination of tradition, patience, and skill and the presence of the earth's most delectable textures and tastes, where there is an invocation of divinity at the beginning and memorable conversation throughout.[29]

Such focal events are compact, and if seen only in their immediate temporal and spatial extent they are easily mistaken. They are more mistakable still when they are thought of as experiences in the subjective sense, events that have their real meaning in transporting a person into a certain mental or emotional state. Focal events, so conceived, fall under the rule of technology. For when a subjective state becomes decisive, the search for a machinery that is functionally equivalent to the traditional enactment of that state begins, and it is spurred by endeavors to find machineries that will procure the state more instantaneously, ubiquitously, more assuredly and easily. If, on the other hand, we guard focal things in their depth and integrity, then, to see them fully and truly, we must see them in context. Things that are deprived of their context become ambiguous.[30] The letter "a" by itself means nothing in particular. In the context of "table" it conveys or helps to convey a more definite meaning. But "table" in turn can mean many things. It means something more powerful in the text of Capon's book where he speaks of "The Vesting of the Table."[31] But that text must finally be seen in the context and texture of the world. To say that something becomes ambiguous is to say that it is made to say less, little, or nothing. Thus to elaborate the context of focal events is to grant them their proper eloquence.

"The distance runner," Sheehan says, "is the least of all athletes. His sport the least of all sports."[32] Running is simply to move through time and space, step-by-step. But there is splendor in that simplicity. In a car we move of course much faster, farther, and more comfortably. But we are not moving on our own power and in our own right. We cash in prior labor for present motion. Being beneficiaries of science and engineering and having worked to be able to pay for a car, gasoline, and roads, we now release what has been earned and stored and use it for transportation. But when these past efforts are consumed and consummated in my driving, I can at best take credit for what I have done. What I am doing now, driving, requires no effort, and little or no skill or discipline. I am a divided person; my achievement lies in the past, my enjoyment in the present. But in the runner, effort and joy are one; the split between means and ends, labor and leisure is healed.[33] To be sure, if I have trained conscientiously, my past efforts will bear fruit in a race. But they are not just cashed in. My strength must be risked and

enacted in the race which is itself a supreme effort and an occasion to expand my skill.

This unity of achievement and enjoyment, of competence and consummation, is just one aspect of a central wholeness to which running restores us. Good running engages mind and body. Here the mind is more than an intelligence that happens to be housed in a body. Rather the mind is the sensitivity and the endurance of the body.[34] Hence running in its fullness, as Sheehan stresses over and over again, is in principle different from exercise designed to procure physical health. The difference between running and physical exercise is strikingly exhibited in one and the same issue of the *New York Times Magazine*. It contains an account by Peter Wood of how, running the New York City Marathon, he took in the city with body and mind, and it has an account by Alexandra Penney of corporate fitness programs where executives, concerned about their Coronary Risk Factor Profile, run nowhere on treadmills or ride stationary bicycles.[35] In another issue, the *Magazine* shows executives exercising their bodies while busying their dissociated minds with reading.[36] To be sure, unless a runner concentrates on bodily performance, often in an effort to run the best possible race, the mind wanders as the body runs. But as in free association we range about the future and the past, the actual and the possible, our mind, like our breathing, rhythmically gathers itself to the here and now, having spread itself to distant times and faraway places.

It is clear from these reflections that the runner is mindful of the body because the body is intimate with the world. The mind becomes relatively disembodied when the body is severed from the depth of the world, i.e., when the world is split into commodious surfaces and inaccessible machineries. Thus the unity of ends and means, of mind and body, and of body and world is one and the same. It makes itself felt in the vividness with which the runner experiences reality. "Somehow you feel more in touch," Wood says, "with the realities of a massive inner-city housing problem when you are running through it slowly enough to take in the grim details, and, surprisingly, cheered on by the remaining occupants."[37] As this last remark suggests, the wholeness that running establishes embraces the human family too. The experience of that simple event releases an equally simple and profound sympathy. It is a natural goodwill, not in need of drugs nor dependent on a common enemy. It wells up from depths that have been forgotten, and it overwhelms the runners ever and again.[38] As Wood recounts his running through streets normally besieged by crime and violence, he remarks: "But we can only be amazed today at the warmth that emanates from streets usually better known for violent crime." And his response to the spectators' enthusiasm is this: "I feel a great proximity to the crowd, rushing past at all of nine miles per hour; a great affection for them individually; a commitment to run as well as I possibly can, to acknowledge their support."[39] For George

Sheehan, finally, running discloses the divine. When he runs, he wrestles with God.[40] Serious running takes us to the limits of our being. We run into threatening and seemingly unbearable pain. Sometimes, of course, the plunge into that experience gets arrested in ambition and vanity. But it can take us further to the point where in suffering our limits we experience our greatness too. This, surely, is a hopeful place to escape technology, metaphysics, and the God of the philosophers and reach out to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.[41]

If running allows us to center our lives by taking in the world through vigor and simplicity, the culture of the table does so by joining simplicity with cosmic wealth. Humans are such complex and capable beings that they can fairly comprehend the world and, containing it, constitute a cosmos in their own right. Because we are standing so eminently over against the world, to come in touch with the world becomes for us a challenge and a momentous event. In one sense, of course, we are always already in the world, breathing the air, touching the ground, feeling the sun. But as we can in another sense withdraw from the actual and present world, contemplating what is past and to come, what is possible and remote, we celebrate correspondingly our intimacy with the world. This we do most fundamentally when in eating we take in the world in its palpable, colorful, nourishing immediacy. Truly human eating is the union of the primal and the cosmic. In the simplicity of bread and wine, of meat and vegetable, the world is gathered.

The great meal of the day, be it at noon or in the evening, is a focal event par excellence. It gathers the scattered family around the table. And on the table it gathers the most delectable things nature has brought forth. But it also recollects and presents a tradition, the immemorial experiences of the race in identifying and cultivating edible plants, in domesticating and butchering animals; it brings into focus closer relations of national or regional customs, and more intimate traditions still of family recipes and dishes. It is evident from the preceding chapters how this living texture is being rent through the procurement of food as a commodity and the replacement of the culture of the table by the food industry. Once food has become freely available, it is only consistent that the gathering of the meal is shattered and disintegrates into snacks, T.V. dinners, bites that are grabbed to be eaten; and eating itself is scattered around television shows, late and early meetings, activities, overtime work, and other business. This is increasingly the normal condition of technological eating. But it is within our power to clear a central space amid the clutter and distraction. We can begin with the simplicity of a meal that has a beginning, a middle, and an end and that breaks through the superficiality of convenience food in the simple steps of beginning with raw ingredients, preparing and transforming them, and bringing them to the table. In this way we can again become freeholders of our culture. We are disfranchised from world citizenship when the foods we eat are mere commodities. Being essentially opaque surfaces, they repel all efforts at extending our

sensibility and competence into the deeper reaches of the world. A Big Mac and a Coke can overwhelm our tastebuds and accommodate our hunger. Technology is not, after all, a children's crusade but a principled and skillful enterprise of defining and satisfying human needs. Through the diversion and busyness of consumption we may have unlearned to feel constrained by the shallowness of commodities. But having gotten along for a time and quite well, it seemed, on institutional or convenience food, scales fall from our eyes when we step up to a festively set family table. The foods stand out more clearly, the fragrances are stronger, eating has once more become an occasion that engages and accepts us fully.

To understand the radiance and wealth of a festive meal we must be alive to the interplay of things and humans, of ends and means. At first a meal, once it is on the table, appears to have commodity character since it is now available before us, ready to be consumed without effort or merit. But though there is of course in any eating a moment of mere consuming, in a festive meal eating is one with an order and discipline that challenges and ennobles the participants. The great meal has its structure. It begins with a moment of reflection in which we place ourselves in the presence of the first and last things. It has a sequence of courses; it requires and sponsors memorable conversation; and all this is enacted in the discipline called table manners. They are warranted when they constitute the respectful and skilled response to the great things that are coming to pass in the meal. We can see how order and discipline have collapsed when we eat a Big Mac. In consumption there is the pointlike and inconsequential conflation of a sharply delimited human need with an equally contextless and closely fitting commodity. In a Big Mac the sequence of courses has been compacted into one object and the discipline of table manners has been reduced to grabbing and eating. The social context reaches no further than the pleasant faces and quick hands of the people who run the fast-food outlet. In a festive meal, however, the food is served, one of the most generous gestures human beings are capable of. The serving is of a piece with garnishing; garnishing is the final phase of cooking, and cooking is one with preparing the food. And if we are blessed with rural circumstances, the preparation of food draws near the harvesting and the raising of the vegetables in the garden close by. This context of activities is embodied in persons. The dish and the cook, the vegetable and the gardener tell of one another. Especially when we are guests, much of the meal's deeper context is socially and conversationally mediated. But that mediation has translucence and intelligibility because it extends into the farther and deeper recesses without break and with a bodily immediacy that we too have enacted or at least witnessed firsthand. And what seems to be a mere receiving and consuming of food is in fact the enactment of generosity and gratitude, the affirmation of mutual and perhaps religious obligations. Thus eating in a focal setting differs sharply from the social and cultural anonymity of a fast-food outlet.

The pretechnological world was engaging through and through, and not always positively. There also was ignorance, to be sure, of the final workings of God and king; but even the unknown engaged one through mystery and awe. In this web of engagement, meals already had focal character, certainly as soon as there was anything like a culture of the table.[42] Today, however, the great meal does not gather and order a web of thoroughgoing relations of engagement; within the technological setting it stands out as a place of profound calm, one in which we can leave behind the narrow concentration and one-sided strain of labor and the tiring and elusive diversity of consumption. In the technological setting, the culture of the table not only focuses our life; it is also distinguished as a place of healing, one that restores us to the depth of the world and to the wholeness of our being.

As said before, we all have had occasion to experience the profound pleasure of an invigorating walk or a festive meal. And on such occasions we may have regretted the scarcity of such events; we might have been ready to allow such events a more regular and central place in our lives. But for the most part these events remain occasional, and indeed the ones that still grace us may be slipping from our grasp. In Chapter 18 we have seen various aspects of this malaise, especially its connection with television. But why are we acting against our better insights and aspirations?[43] This at first seems all the more puzzling as the engagement in a focal activity is for most citizens of the technological society an instantaneous and ubiquitous possibility. On any day I can decide to run or to prepare a meal after work. Everyone has some sort of suitable equipment. At worst one has to stop on the way home to pick up this or that. It is of course technology that has opened up these very possibilities. But why are they lying fallow for the most part? There is a convergence of several factors. Labor is exhausting, especially when it is divided. When we come home, we often feel drained and crippled. Diversion and pleasurable consumption appear to be consonant with this sort of disability. They promise to untie the knots and to soothe the aches. And so they do at a shallow level of our existence. At any rate, the call for exertion and engagement seems like a cruel and unjust demand. We have sat in the easy chair, beer at hand and television before us; when we felt stirrings of ambition, we found it easy to ignore our superego.[44] But we also may have had our alibi refuted on occasion when someone to whom we could not say no prevailed on us to put on our coat and to step out into cold and windy weather to take a walk. At first our indignation grew. The discomfort was worse than we had thought. But gradually a transformation set in. Our gait became steady, our blood began to flow vigorously and wash away our tension, we smelled the rain, began thoughtfully to speak with our companion, and finally returned home settled, alert, and with a fatigue that was capable of restful sleep.

But why did such occurrences remain episodes also? The reason lies in the mistaken assumption that the shaping of our lives can be left to a series of individual decisions. Whatever goal in life we entrust to this kind of implementation we in fact surrender to erosion. Such a policy ignores both the frailty and strength of human nature. On the spur of the moment, we normally act out what has been nurtured in our daily practices as they have been shaped by the norms of our time. When we sit in our easy chair and contemplate what to do, we are firmly enmeshed in the framework of technology with our labor behind us and the blessings of our labor about us, the diversions and enrichments of consumption. This arrangement has had our lifelong allegiance, and we know it to have the approval and support of our fellows. It would take superhuman strength to stand up to this order ever and again. If we are to challenge *the rule of technology,* we can do so only through *the practice of engagement.*

The human ability to establish and commit oneself to a practice reflects our capacity to comprehend the world, to harbor it in its expanse as a context that is oriented by its focal points. To found a practice is to guard a focal concern, to shelter it against the vicissitudes of fate and our frailty. John Rawls has pointed out that there is decisive difference between the justification of a practice and of a particular action falling under it.[45] Analogously, it is one thing to decide for a focal practice and quite another to decide for a particular action that appears to have focal character.[46] Putting the matter more clearly, we must say that without a practice an engaging action or event can momentarily light up our life, but it cannot order and orient it focally. Competence, excellence, or virtue, as Aristotle first saw, come into being as an *éthos,* a settled disposition and a way of life.[47] Through a practice, Alasdaire MacIntyre says accordingly, "human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended."[48] Through a practice we are able to accomplish what remains unattainable when aimed at in a series of individual decisions and acts.

How can a practice be established today? Here, as in the case of focal things, it is helpful to consider the foundation of pretechnological practices. In mythic times the latter were often established through the founding and consecrating act of a divine power or mythic ancestor. Such an act, as mentioned in Chapter 22, set up a sacred precinct and center that gave order to a violent and hostile world. A sacred practice, then, consisted in the regular reenactment of the founding act, and so it renewed and sustained the order of the world. Christianity came into being this way; the eucharistic meal, the Supper of the Lamb, is its central event, established with the instruction that it be reenacted. Clearly a focal practice today should have centering and orienting force as well. But it differs in important regards from its grand precursors. A mythic focal practice derived much force from the power of its opposition. The alternative to the preservation of the cosmos was chaos, social and physical disorder and collapse. It is a reduction to see mythic practices merely as coping behavior of high survival value. A myth does not just aid survival; it defines what truly human life is. Still, as in the case of pretechnological morality, economic and social factors were interwoven with

mythic practices. Thus the force of brute necessity supported, though it did not define, mythic focal practices. Since a mythic focal practice united in itself the social, the economic, and the cosmic, it was naturally a prominent and public affair. It rested securely in collective memory and in the mutual expectations of the people.

This sketch, of course, fails to consider many other kinds of pretechnological practices. But it does present one important aspect of them and more particularly one that serves well as a backdrop for focal practices in a technological setting. It is evident that technology is itself a sort of practice, and it procures its own kind of order and security. Its history contains great moments of innovation, but it did not arise out of a founding event that would have focal character; nor has it, as argued in Chapter 20, produced focal things. Thus it is not a *focal* practice, and it has indeed, so I have urged, a debilitating tendency to scatter our attention and to clutter our surroundings. A focal practice today, then, meets no tangible or overtly hostile opposition from its context and is so deprived of the wholesome vigor that derives from such opposition. But there is of course an opposition at a more profound and more subtle level. To feel the support of that opposing force one must have experienced the subtly debilitating character of technology, and above all one must understand, explicitly or implicitly, that the peril of technology lies not in this or that of its manifestations but in *the pervasiveness and consistency of its pattern*. There are always occasions where a Big Mac, an exercycle, or a television program are unobjectionable and truly helpful answers to human needs. This makes a case-by-case appraisal of technology so inconclusive. It is when we attempt to take the measure of technologial life in its normal totality that we are distressed by its shallowness. And I believe that the more strongly we sense and the more clearly we understand the coherence and the character of technology, the more evident it becomes to us that technology must be countered by an equally patterned and social commitment, i.e., by a practice.

At this level the opposition of technology does become fruitful to focal practices. They can now be seen as restoring a depth and integrity to our lives that are in principle excluded within the paradigm of technology. MacIntyre, though his foil is the Enlightenment more than technology, captures this point by including in his definition of practice the notion of "goods internal to a practice."[49] These are one with the practice and can only be obtained through that practice. The split between means and ends is healed. In contrast "there are those goods externally and contingently attached" to a practice; and in that case there "are always alternative ways for achieving such goods, and their achievement is never to be had *only* by engaging in some particular kind of practice"[50] Thus practices (in a looser sense) that serve external goods are subvertible by technology. But MacIntyre's point needs to be clarified and extended to include or emphasize not only the essential unity of human being and a particular sort of doing but also the tangible things in which the world

comes to be focused. The importance of this point has been suggested by the consideration of running and the culture of the table. There are objections to this suggestion that will be examined in the next chapter. Here I want to advance the thesis by considering Rawls's contention that a practice is defined by rules. We can take a rule as an instruction for a particular domain of life to act in a certain way under specified circumstances. How important is the particular character of the tangible setting of the rules? Though Rawls does not address this question directly he suggests in using baseball for illustration that "a peculiarly shaped piece of wood" and a kind of bag become a bat and base only within the confines defined by the rules of baseball.[51] Rules and the practice they define, we might argue in analogy to what Rawls says about their relation to particular cases, are logically prior to their tangible setting. But the opposite contention seems stronger to me. Clearly the possibilities and challenges of baseball are crucially determined by the layout and the surface of the field, the weight and resilience of the ball, the shape and size of the bat, etc. One might of course reply that there are rules that define the physical circumstances of the game. But this is to take "rule" in broader sense. Moreover it would be more accurate to say that the rules of this latter sort reflect and protect the identity of the original tangible circumstances in which the game grew up. The rules, too, that circumscribe the actions of the players can be taken as ways of securing and ordering the playful challenges that arise in the human interplay with reality. To be sure there are developments and innovations in sporting equipment. But either they quite change the nature of the sport as in pole vaulting, or they are restrained to preserve the identity of the game as in baseball.

It is certainly the purpose of a focal practice to guard in its undiminished depth and identity the thing that is central to the practice, to shield it against the technological diremption into means and end. Like values, rules and practices are recollections, anticipations, and, we can now say, guardians of the concrete things and events that finally matter. Practices protect focal things not only from technological subversion but also against human frailty. It was emphasized in Chapter 21 that the ultimately significant things to which we respond in deictic discourse cannot be possessed or controlled. Hence when we reach out for them, we miss them occasionally and sometimes for quite some time. Running becomes unrelieved pain and cooking a thankless chore. If in the technological mode we insisted on assured results or if more generally we estimated the value of future efforts on the basis of recent experience, focal things would vanish from our lives. A practice keeps faith with focal things and saves for them an opening in our lives. To be sure, eventually the practice needs to be empowered again by the reemergence of the great thing in its splendor. A practice that is not so revived degenerates into an empty and perhaps deadening ritual.

We can now summarize the significance of a focal practice and say that such a practice is required to counter technology in its patterned pervasiveness

and to guard focal things in their depth and integrity. Countering technology through a practice is to take account of our susceptibility to technological distraction, and it is also to engage the peculiarly human strength of comprehension, i.e., the power to take in the world in its extent and significance and to respond through an enduring commitment. Practically a focal practice comes into being through resoluteness, either an explicit resolution where one vows regularly to engage in a focal activity from this day on or in a more implicit resolve that is nurtured by a focal thing in favorable circumstances and matures into a settled custom.

In considering these practical circumstances we must acknowledge a final difference between focal practices today and their eminent pretechnological predecessors. The latter, being public and prominent, commanded elaborate social and physical settings: hierarchies, offices, ceremonies, and choirs; edifices, altars, implements, and vestments. In comparison our focal practices are humble and scattered. Sometimes they can hardly be called practices, being private and limited. Often they begin as a personal regimen and mature into a routine without ever attaining the social richness that distinguishes a practice. Given the often precarious and inchoate nature of focal practices, evidently focal things and practices, for all the splendor of their simplicity and their fruitful opposition to technology, must be further clarified in their relation to our everyday world if they are to be seen as a foundation for the reform of technology.

METAPHYSICAL LIBERALISM IN HEIDEGGER'S *BEITRÄGE ZUR PHILOSOPHIE*

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HEIDEGGER'S REMARKS on liberalism in his *Contributions to Philosophy*[1] are not systematic; they occur at only six points in this five-hundred-page text, and he makes them in passing. But their very scarcity makes them all the more valuable—and when we read them together with Heidegger's more extensive remarks on Nazi ideology and in the context of his vision of our existential condition as a whole, his reasons for rejecting liberalism become quite clear. For Heidegger, liberalism, along with fascism and communism, is a product of modern subjectivist metaphysics.

It seems particularly important to attend to this line of thought because most discussions of Heidegger's politics, whether apologetic or condemnatory, concentrate on his reasons for choosing National Socialism. The debate then focuses on whether this choice was essentially connected to Heidegger's philosophical thought, to what extent it was justified by Heidegger's understanding (or misunderstanding) of Nazism, and whether Heidegger ever appropriately distanced himself from this choice. But while these issues are very significant, we must also try to understand the choices that Heidegger did not make—among them, the choice of liberal democracy.[2] The question of what Heidegger rejected, and why, becomes still more important when we

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notice that, although it can be argued that Heidegger was not or ceased to be a true fascist, it can hardly be argued that he ceased to be antiliberal.[3] Whether Heidegger broke with Nazism—and the *Beiträge* do show signs of a break with the official party ideology[4]—he drew no closer to liberal democracy. Furthermore, while Heidegger's search for an ideal Nazism is rarely condoned, his claim that actual Nazism is essentially the same as actual liberalism has gained extensive credence: in certain circles, it has become commonplace to hold that both fascism and liberalism are merely variants of an underlying subjectivism or "humanism."[5]

If one thinks, then, that liberal democracy deserves more credit than Heidegger gives it and that there are decisive differences between liberalism and Nazism, one must ask whether Heidegger's hostility to liberalism points to a fatal flaw in his thought—or perhaps simply an absence. But one must also take his hostility seriously, think through its grounds, and expose oneself to the possibility that it is liberalism that is flawed or incomplete. My aim is to open such a debate by clarifying the nature of Heidegger's rejection of liberalism and suggesting a direction that a defense of liberalism against Heidegger's critique might take.

Since the term *liberalism* is notoriously ambiguous, it is natural to begin by asking to what the term refers, for Heidegger. Unfortunately, although he has things to say about the essential nature of liberalism, he does not generally indicate which thoughts, people, or institutions deserve to be called "liberal" in the first place. However, two of Heidegger's comments can help us here. Liberalism is said to focus on "the 'I' " (pp. 52-53, 319); it also insists on individual freedom of opinion (p. 38). It would seem, then, that "liberalism" for Heidegger (as for most political theorists today) refers to the Lockean tradition of defending individual liberties against governmental power. In rejecting "liberalism," then, Heidegger is rejecting the mode of political thought that focuses on individual rights—and, implicitly, the institutions of Weimar that were designed to secure those rights.

But we must immediately add that "liberalism" means much more to Heidegger than a type of regime or a political theory: it is a comprehensive "world view" (pp. 24-25, 38), a vision of human beings and of their place in the totality of beings—and it is exclusively on this level that he attacks it. Heidegger would probably agree with his contemporary Carl Schmitt's claim that "it is necessary to see liberalism as a coherent, all-embracing, metaphysical system."[6] Since Heidegger criticizes liberalism as a metaphysical system, his hostility to it is based on his critique of metaphysics in general. To anticipate Heidegger's critique, which we will consider in context and in greater detail below, we can say that he treats liberalism as a form of the metaphysics of presence that has supposedly dominated Western thought

since Plato. In the modern age, the metaphysics of presence becomes subjectivism (which we could just as well call objectivism). Subjectivism pictures the human situation in terms of the subject, the object, and a representational connection between the two. The subject is supposed to be in complete command of its own consciousness, perfectly self-present or at least potentially so; the object is supposed to be a thing that occurs as present within a neutral space; and the subject is supposed to be capable of presenting itself with the object by representing it, that is, by following some procedure that will yield the correct picture or account of the object and thus make the object available for manipulation.

Heidegger diagnoses not only liberalism but all the totalizing ideologies he sees around him as symptoms of this subjectivism. His own conception of "Dasein" intends to make a radical break with subjectivity—and with the rest of the metaphysics of presence. Thus, as I will show, he rejects official Nazi ideology, Russian Communism, and liberalism all on the same grounds: these ideologies are metaphysically subjectivist and have been superseded by his own interpretation of Dasein and Being. For Heidegger, then, the self-interpretation of liberalism in terms of political liberties is irrelevant to its essence, which is determined by the subjectivist distortion of human freedom that dominates all modern ideologies. He writes in 1940,

> "Liberalism," if with this word we think any sufficiently clear concept at all, is just a particular permutation [*Abartung*] of the *libertas* whose essence unfolds as the history of modernity. . . . The history of subjectivity is the history of liberation for the new essence of freedom, in the sense of humanity's unconditional self-legislation.[7]

As insightful as Heidegger's attack on subjectivist metaphysics may be, his dismissal of a political doctrine of individual liberties as merely "a particular permutation" of subjectivism should give us pause. Before we follow Heidegger, we have to ask ourselves whether the differences between liberal and illiberal political prescriptions are really as trivial as he implies. We must also ask whether liberal politics is in fact founded on subjectivist metaphysics. And, if it is, we must investigate whether this fact dooms liberalism or whether, instead, it challenges us to seek a more adequate metaphysical ground for liberal politics.

To understand Heidegger's critique of liberalism more fully, we need to review the most important themes of the *Contributions to Philosophy*, particularly Heidegger's conceptions of sheltering and selfhood.

The *Beiträge*, which were composed in 1936-38 but published only in 1989, set the tone for all of Heidegger's later writings; they are separated

from *Being and Time* by the so-called turn in Heidegger's thought. Some comparisons between *Being and Time* and the *Beiträge* may help us, then, to see the direction that Heidegger is taking. The central contention of *Being and Time* carries over to the *Beiträge*: Heidegger maintains that it is only through the temporality of our own way of Being that a field opens up within which beings can present themselves to us. In the vocabulary of *Being and Time*, we can say that Dasein's thrownness and projection are constitutive features of its Being-in-the-world, and it is within the world that all entities are encountered.[8] In the vocabulary of the *Beiträge*, we can say that Dasein is the thrown thrower who grounds the There as the truth of Being, which is sheltered in beings (cf. pp. 356-57, 467). Thus, in both texts, Heidegger proposes that the subject-object relation is subordinate to Dasein's temporality or historicity: if it were not for our indebtedness to the past and our responsibility for the future, beings would not be available to us at all. The correctness of representation is thus dependent on the unconcealment of beings, which occurs temporally. Furthermore, the finitude of temporal unconcealment implies that no representation is absolute and that the dream of perfect presence is just a dream that inauthentically evades historicity.

Several features of *Being and Time* disappear, however, in the *Beiträge*. The systematic framework of *Being and Time*, where Heidegger progresses to supposedly deeper and deeper levels of interpretation, is replaced by a fragmentary style: his writing "is no edifice of thoughts anymore, but blocks apparently fallen at random in a quarry in which bedrock is broken" (p. 436). The text is a collection of numbered sections, ranging from concentrated essays of several pages in length to schematic diagrams consisting only of a few words connected by arrows. Often the style is compressed and cryptic, and the language is more idiosyncratic than in any writings that Heidegger published during his lifetime.

The absence of systematic structure is paralleled by the absence of universalizing pretensions in Heidegger's claims about Dasein. In *Being and Time*, it appeared that Dasein was a universal that applied to all human beings as its instances. Now, Dasein is clearly a historical possibility rather than what we already are; it is what "we" have the potential to become. "We" means we Westerners and especially we Germans; Heidegger does not deny that Dasein may be a possibility for other human beings as well, but he makes it clear that he is speaking from a situation to others who presumably share that situation.[9] The situation is one in which "we" stand at a crucial moment in history, a moment that will decide whether we succeed in coming into our own as Dasein.

Heidegger is also at pains now to avoid giving the impression that Dasein is a Kantian subject whose limits provide the transcendental conditions of possibility for its experience of objects (pp. 176, 250-51, 253). This way of thinking is subjectivist. Instead, Being and Dasein need each other reciprocally: Being has no meaning—or, as he now says, no truth—unless Dasein is available to ground the There, but, in turn, Dasein is not Dasein unless it finds itself by being open to Being. The relation of Being and Dasein is so intimate that neither Dasein nor Being can occur without the other (p. 407). One way in which we might understand this mutual dependence is by glossing "Being" as the difference it makes to us that beings are, rather than are not—or, rather, the differences, since Being includes all the multifarious ways in which beings can display themselves as significant. Being is the importance of what there is, which always exceeds any particular thing that there is and is always embedded in the way of existing of a community with a shared heritage. If we think of Being in this way, it should be clear that we cannot truly be ourselves unless beings make a difference to us—that is, unless Being takes place—and that Being cannot take place unless there is someone, some Dasein, to whom beings can make a difference.

However, Being does not automatically reveal itself to us, just as we are not automatically Dasein. In fact, Heidegger claims that we are living through an age that has been abandoned by Being. Being is now withholding itself or is kept in oblivion (e.g., p. 107). When Being withdraws, beings become *das Unseiende*, unbeings (e.g., pp. 30, 119, 317). This is not to say that they wink out of existence, but that their historical significance, the difference they make, has been covered over. The significance of beings is reduced to mere objectivity, which is accompanied by subjectivity: in the age of machination (*Machenschaft*, which Heidegger will later call *Technik*), beings are nothing for us but manipulable substances, truth is nothing but information processing, and the self is nothing but a representing and manipulating subject (e.g., pp. 108-9).

Once we have experienced the "horror" of this withdrawal of Being (p. 15), we can reflect on the history of the withdrawal. It stretches back at least to Plato, for whom, according to Heidegger, beings are to be understood in terms of their essential aspects, their "Ideas." For Heidegger, essences and Platonic Ideas are simply distinctive aspects under which beings present themselves to us, and Plato is incapable of understanding presentation itself (pp. 208-10). This incapacity leads directly to the metaphysics of presence and thus to our own subjectivistic age. We must, then, think through the "first beginning" of Western thought to prepare "the other beginning" (pp. 229-30). As a result of

the first beginning, presentation is forgotten, while present beings come to the fore; Being, then, is reduced to an empty, universal abstraction from present beings (e.g., p. 425). In the other beginning, however, Being will be the rich significance that pervades all that is, a significance that comes to pass as a unique event of appropriation, or *Ereignis*.

Heidegger sees himself as laying the groundwork for such a new beginning, which will arrive only when future human beings leap into Dasein and thus come into their own.[10] This leap will ground the There as the historical site in which beings can be meaningful (pp. 235-37). If the leap is carried out, our entire relation to beings will be transformed and enriched. Beings will no longer be mere objects for us but will be experienced as "sheltering" the truth of Being (p. 389). This will open up the possibility of experiencing the divine once again—even if only as the gods' absence (e.g., p. 405). As it stands, the Christian God has been infected by metaphysics and has died of this illness (pp. 202, 411), and the very issue of gods or the god makes no difference to us. Heidegger holds that Dasein can truly come into its own only when a people searches for its god (p. 398).

Sheltering (*Bergung*) is one of the central concepts of the *Beiträge* and is crucial to a full understanding of Dasein as an alternative to subjectivism. Heidegger explains the concept as follows:

> Sheltering belongs to the essencing of truth. . . . The clearing must ground itself in what is open within it. It requires that which it contains in openness, and that is a being, different in each case (thing—tool—work). But this sheltering of what is open must also and in advance be such that openness comes into being [*seiend wird*] in such a way that self-concealment, and thereby Being, essences [*west*] in it. . . . But truth essences in the fullest and richest clearing of the most distant self-concealment only in the manner of sheltering according to all paths and manners that belong to the clearing, and that bear and lead the steadfast endurance [*inständiges Ausstehen*] of Da-sein, and thus constitute being-a-people [*Volksein*]. (pp. 389-90)

In other words, the truth of Being, the overall significance of things as a whole, cannot occur unless specific entities are unconcealed. The truth of Being occurs most fully when we encounter these entities in their connections to the entire field of meaning. We can then recognize that the significance of a present thing depends on its relations to other meanings within a network of significance, a network that itself can never be fully presented in a perfect representation.[11] We should also be aware of the contingency and limits of this network of significance: since it is historical, it is always finite and open to new possibilities. Hence, Being is never completely manifest but necessarily involves self-concealment (e.g., 349). Sheltering, then, involves a

mystery that we lose sight of when we experience things merely as objects. Sheltering lets the limits of meaning show up at the same time as it reveals a network of meaning in every experience of concrete beings. Beings are thus imbued with the richness of their place in a meaningful whole and simultaneously resist total explanation in terms of this meaningful whole.[12] The finitude of meaning incites us to allow meaning to evolve creatively and responsively.

Our task, then, if we are to become Dasein, is to be the being for whom the truth of Being is sheltered in beings: the task is "the creative preservation of the sheltering of Being in that which, in accord with such sheltering, sets itself as beings into the clearing of the There" (p. 467). Dasein, then, is not merely man as the central thing among other things. Rather, Dasein is the maintenance of creative openness to the significance of what is, to the difference it makes that there are beings rather than nothing. Dasein *is* by creatively letting all beings make a difference. Creativity here does not mean producing beings ex nihilo as an absolute subject (p. 303), but it is responsive attunement to an inherited significance in both its possibilities and its limitations.

This means that *selfhood* is not merely self-consciousness, self-possession, or self-control. All these concepts assume that we are essentially a present thing that is distinguished by its capacity to become present to itself. But if we are, or become, Dasein rather than a subject, then we can be ourselves only through creative responsiveness to a finite field of significance. We become ourselves only by appreciating the meaningfulness of all beings, not by setting ourselves up as the supreme being (pp. 319-21).

Now it should be clear in what sense Heidegger is opposed to "humanism," if humanism exalts the human being while implying that it has been comfortably decided, once and for all, what or who we are (cf. p. 61). This comfortable self-interpretation is part of an interpretation of beings as a whole that takes for granted what it means to *be*. The problem with humanism is that what distinguishes Dasein is precisely that it is the being who, if it is to be itself, cannot take the meaning of Being for granted but is called to be appropriated by Being and to appropriate Being.[13]

We are now ready to consider how Heidegger's critique of liberalism springs from his attack on the notions of subject, object, and representation and from his conception of Dasein as the preserver of the sheltering of Being in beings. Let us begin with some references to liberalism that are made in the context of a reflection on selfhood.

> [Philosophy,] as meditation on Being, is necessarily meditation on the self [*Selbstbesinnung*]. . . . The philosophical question can, from this viewpoint, be put into the form: *who are we?* (p. 48)
>
> This meditation on the self is beyond all "subjectivism," including the most dangerous subjectivism that lurks in the cult of "personality." Wherever personality is posited . . . everything is moving along the track of the modern thought of the "I" and consciousness. Whether one understands personality as the unity of "spirit-soul-body" or reverses this mish-mash and simply asserts that the body comes first makes no difference as regards the confusion of thought that is ruling here and that excludes all questioning. Here the "spirit" is always taken as "reason," as the faculty of being able to say "I." Here even Kant was already more advanced than this biological liberalism. Kant saw that the person is more than "I"; it is grounded in giving the law to oneself. Of course, even this was still Platonism.
>
> Meditation on the self as the grounding of selfhood stands outside the aforementioned doctrines. It knows, though, that something essential is decided if the question of who we are is asked, or if it is not only held at bay, but denied even as a question.
>
> Not wanting to ask this question means either shrinking back before the questionable truth about man, or spreading the conviction that it has been decided for all eternity who we are.
>
> In the latter case, all experiences and achievements are carried out merely as the *expression* of "life" which is sure of "itself," and are hence taken to be organizable. In principle there is no experience that could ever set man above himself into an untrodden realm, on the basis of which man up to now could become questionable. This self-sureness is the innermost essence of "liberalism," which for this very reason can apparently develop freely and devote itself to progress for all eternity. (pp. 52-53)

Heidegger's train of thought in this passage begins with the observation that philosophy requires us to ask who we are. To what does "we" refer? Human beings as such? But there is no "Man" in general, according to Heidegger, since "we" always exist historically (p. 48). The answer, then, must be sought historically—and in terms of the history of *Being*, not just in terms of the development of man as one entity among others. As the truth of Being takes place, Dasein also happens—since, as we have seen, there is a reciprocal relation between the two. Who we become depends on how we respond to the task of creatively preserving the sheltering of Being in beings.

Heidegger proceeds to write that this question of who we are is "*more dangerous*" (p. 54) than any controversy between various self-satisfied, humanistic conceptions of human beings. He mentions several such conceptions: Christianity, personalism, the cult of genius, the cult of the body, rationalism, Marxism, and liberalism. Heidegger tends to run all these interpretations of man together—and the true "danger" here, we may suspect, is that crucial distinctions are being blurred. For instance, although at one point in this passage Heidegger resists the Nazi propaganda that equates Bolshevism and Judaism, he ends up associating Bolshevism with rationalistic egalitarianism and thus with Christianity, and thus eventually with Judaism. He then asks the odd and ominous question, "What decisions become necessary on this basis?" (p. 54). Possibly he means that National Socialism needs to fight Christianity just as much as it is fighting its other enemies.[14] But he also implies that National Socialism itself is being overcome by humanism—at least, it is likely that he is referring to racist ideology when he speaks of views that put the body higher than the spirit (p. 53).

What these diverse ideologies are supposed to have in common is a certain complacency about human nature, a self-satisfied humanism that is oblivious to the possibility of being Dasein. All these ideologies "spread the conviction that it has been decided for all eternity who we are. . . . This self-sureness is the innermost essence of 'liberalism' " (p. 53). To extrapolate somewhat from Heidegger's remarks: for Christianity, man is the sinning creature; for Marxism, man is the producer; and for liberalism, man would presumably be the individual ego, the "I." Heidegger associates liberalism with "the faculty of being able to say 'I' " (p. 53). Liberalism is based on I-saying—presumably because, according to liberalism, "I" must have my rights and my freedom, as should every "I." But then the "I" is taken for granted as something immediately accessible—one knows who one is, what one wills, and what one believes. This self-presence is the distinguishing characteristic of the traditional concept of the self, according to Heidegger—and what it misses is the fact that presence in general depends on the historical emergence of meaning. For ideologies that are based on self-presence, we can do all sorts of things and achieve all sorts of things, but who we are remains certain and self-evident—and, consequently, the meaning of Being itself remains unquestioned. Thus, liberalism, says Heidegger, can go on "progressing" forever precisely because its basis is static (p. 53).

There are other places where Heidegger puts a number of seemingly distinct worldviews into the same basket. In the following passage, for example, he criticizes the concept of transcendence, which he claims can be found in Christianity, Nazi ideology, liberalism, and the notion of "cultural values." (It should be noted that in the *Beiträge*, Heidegger never mentions the Nazi Party or its leaders by name. However, it makes sense to assume that his vehement attacks on prevailing notions of the *Volk* and *das Völkische* refer to the official ideology as usually expressed in the late thirties.)

> When God and the gods are spoken of, we think, according to our long-accustomed ways of representing, in the form which the term "transcendence" still indicates most readily. . . . What is meant is something that surpasses present-at-hand beings, and among these, man as well. Even when certain modes of what surpasses and of the surpassing itself are denied, this way of thinking itself does not allow itself to be denied. It is even easy to obtain a survey of today's "world views" in terms of this way of thinking:

1. The transcendent (imprecisely also called "transcendence") is the God of Christianity.

2. This "transcendence" is denied, and the "people" ["*Volk*"] itself—its essence left indeterminate enough—is set up as the goal and purpose of all history. This anti-Christian "world view" is only *apparently* un-Christian; for in what is *essential*, it still coincides with that way of thinking which characterizes "liberalism."

3. The transcendent is here an "idea" or "value" or "meaning," the sort of thing for which one cannot live and die, but which is supposed to be actualized through "culture."

4. Two of these transcendences—folkish [*völkische*] ideas and Christianity, or folkish ideas and cultural politics, or Christianity and culture—or all three are mixed together in a more or less definite way. And this mixed form is today's average and dominant "world view," in which everything is opined, and nothing can come to a decision anymore.

Now, as different as these "world views" are . . . they all agree, without knowing or reflecting on it, on this one point: man is posited as what is already known in its essence, as the being for which and from which all "transcendence" is determined, yet determined as something that itself is supposed to determine man in the first place. (pp. 24-25)

For all these ideologies, man is to be understood in terms of something that exceeds man; this higher entity shows human beings their place and assigns them their calling. But this higher entity is itself understood in terms of man. Perhaps Heidegger means that the higher entity is conceived as escaping all the limitations of individual human beings. For instance, God is conceived as nonfinite and nontemporal, while the *Volk* is nonprivate, nonarbitrary, enduring across generations. Thus, there is an unquestioned, implicit self-interpretation of man at the basis of all these ideologies. Although it is difficult to say what the "transcendent" of liberalism would be—universal human rights, perhaps?—it is clear that Heidegger associates liberalism with the other ideologies because they all take the essence of human beings to be predetermined. Humanness is no longer open to question, to decision—presumably because early in Western thought, the human essence was decided and then hardened into something self-evident.

This line of thought leads Heidegger to say that the liberal worldview is no less authoritarian and totalizing than any other:

World views always direct experience into a particular track and . . . thus narrow and prevent authentic experience.

Philosophy *opens up* experience, but for this very reason it is *incapable* of *immediately* grounding history. . . .

The last genuine remnant concealed in the thought of "scientific" philosophy . . . is: to ground and construct the knowable in a unitary system (mathematically) on the basis of and in consequence of the idea of knowledge as certainty (self-certainty). In this project of "scientific" philosophy, there still lives an impulse of philosophy itself, the impulse to save its *most proper topic* [*eigenste Sache*] from the arbitrariness of world-view opinions that change capriciously, and from the necessarily restrictive and authoritarian style of world views in general. For even in the "liberal" world view there is still this

arrogance, in that it demands that everyone should be allowed to have his own opinion. But arbitrariness is the slavery of the "accidental." (pp. 37-38)

All worldviews are closed systems, self-satisfied and arrogant dogmas—even liberalism, for it dogmatically asserts that everyone should be guided by his own opinion. On this point, at least, Heidegger is hardly as anti-Platonist as he thinks. His reasoning here, with its rejection of δόξα and its contempt for political freedom, is reminiscent of the classic attack on democracy presented by Plato's Socrates in the *Republic* (557b-558c). Democratic regimes and souls are driven about capriciously by ignorant desires, without order or necessity (*Republic*, 561d); hence, their freedom is not true freedom.[15] According to this argument, demanding freedom of opinion turns out to be a way of imposing slavery: everyone is enslaved to the arbitrariness of his or her own beliefs.

There are other passages, too, where Heidegger lumps liberalism together with Nazi ideology while holding out hope for a deeper understanding of the *Volk*:

Only on the basis of Da-sein can the essence of the people be conceived, and this involves knowing the following: that the people can never be a goal and purpose, and that such an opinion is just a "folkish" extension of the "liberal" thought of the "I," and of the economic representation of the preservation of "life."

But the essence of the people is its "voice." This *voice* precisely does not speak in the so-called immediate outburst of the common, natural, undeformed, and uneducated "man." For this witness, so often appealed to, is already very *deformed* and has long stopped moving in the original relations to beings. The *voice* of the people speaks rarely and only in a few—and can it *still* be brought to resound? (p. 319)

Liberalism concerns itself with the maintenance and defense of the "I"; Nazism concerns itself with the maintenance and defense of the *Volk*, which in this worldview reduces to nothing but a larger "I"—a willing, representing, power-seeking ego on the scale of an entire race. In both cases, the essence of man is taken for granted and is a form of subjectivity; what is lost is historical openness to Being.[16] However, Heidegger by no means abandons the idea of the *Volk* but makes the essence of the people reside in an elite who are capable of creatively interpreting the truth of Being.

Passages such as this give us a glimpse of what Heidegger's original hopes were when he joined the Nazi Party in 1933 and how his hopes were disappointed by the subsequent development of the party. For Heidegger, "a 'total' world view" typically overlooks its own "concealed ground (e.g. the essence of the people)" (p. 40). The leitmotif of Heidegger's critique of the Nazi worldview is that it turns the people into a subject instead of recognizing

its potential as Dasein.[17] A "gathering of the people" in terms of " 'world-historical' events" can possibly open up "a way into the vicinity of decision"—"but with the highest danger at the same time of completely mistaking its domain" (p. 98). The danger is that instead of leaping into Dasein, man will become merely "*the technicized animal*" (p. 98); " 'culture' and 'world view' become means for a will that no longer wills any end; for the preservation of the people is not a possible end, but only a prerequisite for establishing ends" (pp. 98-99). The ultimate goal is not to maintain the people as one being among others but to allow the people to become itself by attending to something far greater than itself—by watching over the truth of Being (p. 99).[18] By treating the people as an end in itself, Nazism reproduces the essential failing of individualism:

> The "I"-consciousness . . . can lie hidden in manifold forms. The most dangerous are those in which the worldless "I" has apparently given itself up and devoted itself to something else that is "greater" than it, and to which it is assigned as a piece or member. The dissolution of the "I" into "life" as people—here an overcoming of the "I" is prepared at the price of the first condition for such an overcoming, namely, reflection on Being-a-self and its essence. (p. 321)

Heidegger thus turns the same criticism against nationalism as he does against liberalism.

So far, we have seen how, according to Heidegger, humanistic worldviews reduce Dasein to a subject and lose the dimension of creative responsiveness to Being. Now we need to see how these worldviews reduce other beings to objects.

> Beings can still "be" in the abandonment of Being; under the rule of this abandonment, *immediate* graspability and usefulness and serviceability of every sort (e.g. everything must serve the people) self-evidently constitute *what is in being* [*was seiend ist*] and what is not. (p. 30)

The self-evidence of the meaning of Being here indicates that Being as appropriation has withdrawn; in other words, the significance of things is taken for granted and reduces to mere usefulness for some subjectivity, be it the people or the individual.

This manipulative relation to beings goes hand in hand, according to Heidegger, with modern science. In all of Heidegger's writings on modern science and technology, we can find the same thesis.[19] Heidegger accepts the Cartesian and Kantian characterization of (modern) science as giving priority to its own method and categories over all experience of its objects.[20] Holding rigidly to its procedure, science can force beings to declare themselves one

way or the other within preestablished parameters; this is known as experimentation and gathering data. The data can then be arranged, systematized, and put to use. Heidegger does not claim that scientific results are incorrect, but by resisting all experience that might lead to a revision of scientific method, science narrows down the meaning of Being and encourages an impoverished relation to the world. Beings are reduced to objects that can be mined as sources of information and exploited as resources in the service of subjective will.

Thus, we see Heidegger associating liberalism—a form of subjectivism—with positivism—a form of objectivism. After explaining how, in the modern age, the relation of thinking to beings is narrowed down to a relation between certitude and objects, Heidegger remarks that "it is to be shown how on this basis . . . the *lack* of strength for metaphysical thinking, in unison with the effective forces of the 19th century (liberalism—industrialization—technology) demands positivism" (p. 181). The self-certainty of the subject leads to a conception of knowledge as information gathering and processing, which can then be exploited to serve the interests of the subject. The problem here, once again, is that a "subject" becomes a self only by attending creatively to the finite display of Being that is presupposed in all true statements about beings.

Elsewhere, Heidegger makes this point at greater length:

> Science itself is intrinsically drawn to a *heightening* of the priority of procedure and method over the material domain itself. . . . It is by appealing to "results" and their utility that "Science" must search for the guarantee of its own necessity (whether "Science" justifies itself here as a "cultural value" or as "service to the people" or as "political science" [i.e., science in the service of Nazi political goals] *essentially makes no difference*, which is why all the justifications and ways of "giving meaning" of this sort run together, and increasingly, despite their apparent hostility, turn out to belong together). Only a thoroughly modern (i.e. "liberal") science can be "folkish science." Only modern science, because it gives a priority to procedure over its topic and to the correctness of judgments over the truth of beings, allows itself to be diverted to various aims (carrying out a decided materialism and technicism in Bolshevism; deployment in the four-year plan; use for political training). "Science" is here always *the same*, and precisely through these different aims to which it is put, it becomes at bottom ever more uniform, i.e. more "international."
>
> . . . Thus, it was only a matter of a few years before "Science" got clear about the fact that its "liberal" essence and its "ideal of objectivity" not only matched up well with the political-folkish "orientation," but were indispensable for this orientation. . . . The "folkish" "organization" of "Science" is moving along the same track as the "Americanist"; the question is merely on which side the greater means and forces will be put at one's disposal more quickly and completely, in order to pursue the *unchanged* essence of modern science (which, furthermore, cannot be changed on its own terms) up to its extreme, final condition—a "task" which can still require centuries, and which excludes ever more definitively every possibility of a "crisis" of science, i.e. an essential transformation of knowing and of truth. (pp. 148-49)

According to Heidegger, science tends to give priority to its method over the nature of the thing it is studying. The method is chosen because it yields useful facts, but although these facts may be correct, they may not be based on a genuine insight into the way of Being of the entity under consideration. (For instance, we might gather all sorts of zoological data but fail to appreciate what it is to be an animal.) In this sense, scientific objectivism is subjectivist and manipulative. The manipulative nature of modern science means that its results can be put to work in the interest of some subjectivity—whether it be the *Volk*, the dictatorship of the proletariat, or liberal democracy. The Nazis had claimed there was a difference between *völkisch* science and "liberal," "Americanist" science—or "Jewish science," for that matter. But actually, in Heidegger's view, modern science is the same all over the world. Many would claim that this is so because science transcends subjectivity, but, according to Heidegger, what makes all science the same is precisely its subjective, manipulative nature.[21]

To sum up, Heidegger criticizes liberalism as a metaphysical position, a position that springs from the subjectivist and humanist strains in Western thought. The liberal emphasis on individual rights and liberties rests on a naive conception of the individual "I." The self is taken to be one being among others—distinguished only by its ability to represent other beings and use them (i.e., make beings present in whatever way it wills). In all this, the meaning of Being itself is taken for granted: Being is understood as presence. Thus, liberalism consists in trying to ensure the continued presence of the being that manipulates and represents other beings. Christian, Communist, Nazi, and liberal ideologies differ only in how they circumscribe the limits of the subject—as creature, class, race, or individual. All these ideologies enslave us to the oblivion of Being and close off the possibility of Dasein. Dasein would be characterized by creative receptivity to the differences that beings make to us, which would involve an appreciation of the sheltering of Being in beings. It is not at all clear what political form this "other beginning" might take, although we may surmise that in the late thirties, Heidegger still envisioned it in terms of his idealized version of National Socialism: a movement guided by a spiritual elite who could recognize the need to decide how the people's heritage was to combine with the people's destiny to reveal the significance of what is as a whole. It can hardly be said that this vision is friendly to liberal democracy.

The trains of thought we have been considering, in which Heidegger extends his antisubjectivist, antihumanist stance into a critique of all world-

views, including liberalism, continue to be important for him after the *Beiträge* and after the Second World War. In a number of postwar writings, we find Heidegger, once again, claiming that very diverse social phenomena are all manifestations of the technological subjectivism that is dominating the planet; his most notorious such claim equates death camps with mechanized agriculture.[22] When we consider these claims as a whole, we find, as Richard Bernstein has pointed out, that Heidegger's much-lamented postwar "silence" is not really a silence at all but sends a message that is all too clear.[23] Heidegger is still claiming, as he did in the *Beiträge*, that the difference between Nazism and liberalism is negligible. And this position is not limited to Heidegger himself but has become popular in certain intellectual circles, as I noted at the beginning of this article.

One recently published text is especially worth considering as a careful statement of Heidegger's thinking at the very moment of Germany's collapse. His "Evening Dialogue in a Prisoner-of-War Camp in Russia between a Younger and an Older Man," dated May 8, 1945 (one day after the surrender), is destined to become indispensable reading for those who wish to reflect seriously on Heidegger's political thought.[24] The dialogue develops the idea that the attitude of "pure waiting" is the key to genuine freedom, genuine thinking, genuine poetry, and genuine Germanness.[25] Heidegger's spokesmen leave us with no doubt that he views the Nazi regime as a calamity for Germany. The Germans have been led astray;[26] their youth has been stolen from them;[27] Germany is prone to "tyrannizing itself with its own ignorant impatience" and mistakenly holding that it must "fight to win recognition from other peoples."[28]

However, Heidegger emphatically rejects self-righteous moral judgments.[29] Evil must be understood not in moral terms but as a manifestation of a fundamental "malignancy" (*das Bösartige*) and global "devastation" (*Verwüstung*).[30] The essence of this devastation is "the abandonment of Being."[31] Devastation is by no means limited to scenes of bombing and carnage:

> Younger man: . . . devastation also rules where, and precisely where, land and people are untouched by the destruction of war.
> Older man: Where the world shines in the radiance of advances, advantages and material goods, where human rights are respected, where civil order is maintained, and where, above all, there is a guaranteed supply which constantly satisfies an undisturbed comfort, so that everything can be overseen and remains calculable and manageable in terms of what is useful.[32]

Heidegger clearly has in mind the same phenomenon that he discussed in the *Beiträge*: we no longer attend to the sheltering of Being in beings but set ourselves up as dominating subjects and interpret the world as an exploitable object. Nationalist evil is one manifestation of this subjectivism,[33] but only one. Since internationalism is just subjectivism on a larger scale, "the national and the international are the same."[34] In short, the defeat of Germany is just a triumph of the same worldwide subjectivism that was responsible for the aberrations of Nazism. The planet continues on the same course as before the war.[35] Heidegger bitterly dates his dialogue "on the day when the world celebrated its victory, and did not yet recognize that for centuries already, it has been defeated by its own rebellion."[36]

Few today would deny some of Heidegger's main points: the consumerist cult of progress has its own dangers, and a brave new world of prosperity can conceal an insidious malaise. But must we follow him so far as to dismiss human rights as irrelevant and to view both liberalism and fascism as manifestations of the abandonment of Being? In other words, is it possible to articulate a defense of liberalism that does justice to Heidegger's critique of subjectivism? This is no small task—but some points that Heidegger does not take into consideration do indicate the possibility of a fresh interpretation and appreciation of the liberal position.

First, we should acknowledge that it is to Heidegger's credit that he considers the metaphysical roots of liberal thought. Any attempt to dissociate liberal politics from the problem of Being is an attempt to avoid some highly pertinent issues, for the question, "Is a liberal regime good for human beings?" naturally leads to the question, "What is a human being?" and thus to the question, "What is it to be?" In general, any choice of one state of affairs over another presupposes some understanding of the significance of states of affairs in general—some sense of the difference it makes that things are, rather than are not.[37] But has Heidegger correctly identified the only possible metaphysical basis of liberal politics? Does liberalism rest on an understanding of the human way of Being, and of Being itself, that is indissolubly bound up with a "metaphysics of presence"?

There seems to be little room for doubt that classic liberal arguments have drawn on humanism in Heidegger's sense—a conception of the human being as a radically autonomous, representing, and willing subject—and on metaphysical individualism—a conception of the human being as a unit that is in principle isolable from other such units. As Ian Shapiro puts it, the great seventeenth-century contract theories assume "that the individual will is the cause of all actions, individual and collective; [they ascribe] decisive

epistemic and hence moral authority to the individual over his actions, on the grounds that he has privileged access to the contents of his own mind."[38] If human beings are not perfectly autonomous individual subjects—if they are, or ought to be, participants in a shared responsiveness to Being, as the *Contributions to Philosophy* propose—it would follow that Lockean arguments for liberalism are invalid.

However, this concession does not necessarily undermine liberalism if liberal political prescriptions can also be based on a more adequate conception of human beings. While the rise of liberalism as a political doctrine was certainly made possible by modern thought, it may be that this doctrine can be reconstructed and rejustified without recourse to the subjectivist elements of modernity. We can thus ask, What would a nonsubjectivist liberalism look like?

Liberalism insists that government should give free rein to individual beliefs and choices, insofar as it is politically possible to do so. Liberals are thus committed, to begin with, to the ontological position that there are individuals and that these individuals have beliefs and make choices. But this is not the same as a commitment to metaphysical individualism—that is, a view of human beings as essentially asocial seats of absolute will and consciousness. Rather, the "individualist" core of liberalism is simply an acknowledgment that each human being is capable of some degree of control over his or her existence, so that there is a distinct difference between doing something voluntarily and being forced to do it. And surely it is, on some level, impossible to deny that we do make voluntary choices and have awareness. In other words, we will and we are conscious—or, if we prefer more Heideggerian language, Dasein involves both decision and unconcealment.[39] There is some "I," even if we grant that there is no absolutely autonomous subject and that all choices and representations occur within a context of communal significance.

Thus, one can consistently say both that we always operate within a shared, public culture and that we can, within limits, choose as individuals how we are going to appropriate this culture. In fact, in my view, an instance of such an analysis of individual freedom is Heidegger's own *Being and Time*—an analysis that Heidegger never unambiguously abjured.[40] Another example is the account of human agency presented by Charles Taylor, for whom, while "one cannot be a self on one's own," one can nevertheless take a stand of one's own within a shared "moral space."[41] One more thinker who acknowledges individuality without subscribing to subjectivist individualism is Hannah Arendt. As Dana R. Villa has argued, Arendt accepts the Heideg-

gerian critique of Western metaphysics but uses this critique as an opportunity to develop an account of action, and political action in particular, does justice to the human capacity to initiate events and the plurality of human opinion. While Arendt is hardly an uncritical supporter of liberalism, her advocacy of institutions that allow for the expression of individual choices and beliefs makes her a promising source for postmetaphysical liberal thought.[42]

It thus seems far from impossible to develop meaningful concepts of individual will and consciousness that are not entangled in metaphysical individualism, concepts that can be incorporated into a liberal political theory. In fact, a number of liberal theorists have been doing just this, attempting to show that liberalism can learn from its communitarian critics such as Sandel, Walzer, and MacIntyre while still upholding its essential political principles. To be sure, these projects should consider the Heideggerian caveat that a community as well as an individual can be conceived subjectivistically as an autonomous ego on the national scale, but with the waning of the modern belief that an individual can be a self-sufficient source of meaning, there is reason to hope that the danger of communal subjectivism will also subside.

If liberalism need not endorse the view that we are perfectly autonomous subjects, then it need not endorse the view that other beings are merely objects available for our representation and manipulation. This is not to deny that people under a liberal regime will often objectify beings; it is even plausible to say that this kind of approach to the world is encouraged by the traditionally subjectivist background of liberal discourse and practice. Furthermore, it is certain that even if a nonsubjectivist understanding of liberalism became widespread, many people under a liberal regime would continue to behave subjectivistically—in fact, it is quite unclear how any political system could prevent such an attitude. The fact remains, however, that there is no necessary link between subjectivism and liberalism, even though liberalism does necessarily assert the existence of individual consciousness and will.

But liberalism is committed not only to the position that individual beliefs and choices exist but also to the position that there should be limits on the power of political authorities to interfere with the manifestation of these beliefs and choices. One can show that a liberal regime is the best political system only if one can show that a regime that guarantees individual liberty is in fact the best means of promoting the best sort of human existence. At this point, most antiliberals will charge that the liberal conception of liberty perniciously disregards the fact that human fulfillment involves loyalties and motivations that transcend the individual; furthermore, liberal liberty rests on a negative conception of freedom as freedom from restraints, which is not genuine freedom but simply caprice (*Beiträge*, p. 38). However, we have already seen that advocating individual political liberty is not equivalent to

defending metaphysical individualism. Nor is it equivalent to ethical individualism—the position that individuals ought to be concerned primarily with their personal interests. Liberals need not hold that self-preservation or self-promotion is the ultimate end. Liberal liberty leaves individuals politically free to pursue selfish interests, to work for the welfare of larger groups, or to respond to the sheltering of Being in beings. Furthermore, liberals need not be committed to a negative conception of all freedom. Liberalism simply maintains that citizens should be granted political freedom from government interference in certain areas. This is not to deny that those who have such rights may be unfree in many other ways—for instance, economically or psychologically—or to confuse negative freedom with positive freedom.[43]

But why should the liberty to make one's own choices and express one's own opinions be guaranteed by a political system? One might object that there are, after all, many human virtues (physical strength, loyalty, or knowledge, for instance) that a regime could foster if it were allowed to infringe on individual liberties, while the liberty to choose one's actions and opinions cannot be called a virtue at all, since it is simply an opportunity to pursue either good or bad choices.[44]

In response to this objection, liberals can take at least two paths. First, they can insist that the exercise of free choice leads, at least potentially, to a life that is better than any life under a repressive regime: a strong, loyal, and learned person who had been denied the opportunity to act on his or her own choices would be missing the integrity and responsibility that make a life fully human. Such responsibility need not be conceived in terms of subjectivistic self-domination; it can also be conceived in more Heideggerian terms of creative responsiveness. All types of responsibility are discouraged, one could argue, when a regime denies liberties to its citizens. William Galston, among others, develops this line of argument when he tries to show that liberal democracy depends on and encourages its own constellation of virtues.[45]

A second option is to concede that there are virtues unconnected to liberalism that are at least as desirable as any virtues that may flow from the opportunity to act on one's own choices, but to deny that any government *can* be counted on to promote these nonliberal virtues, while it can be counted on to leave room for liberties when it is regulated by a proper constitution. This argument rests on the observation that authorities are fallible and cannot be trusted to use power benevolently and effectively to promote virtue. But this is the sort of humble political reality that is systematically ignored by Heidegger; he focuses on the metaphysical basis of political ideologies while

completely disregarding actual institutions and policies and their concrete effects on real human beings.

Both of the liberal positions I have just outlined leave open the question of which human virtues should be developed or what we are free for. Here, liberalism is vague: we are free to develop our best potentials, whatever those may be. But is it not precisely this vagueness of liberalism that distinguishes it from totalizing worldviews? Of all political orientations, liberalism may be the one that can best afford to take the essence of human beings to be undecided. Liberalism leaves ample room for the historical process of becoming ourselves by creatively appropriating meaning—the very process with which Heidegger was so concerned.

Heidegger's systematic indifference to the concrete effects of political institutions represents a significant gap in his thinking—and it can be argued that this gap prevents him from being a political thinker at all. For even though thoughtful political philosophers must reflect on their understanding of human nature and of Being itself, they also have to concern themselves with empirical generalizations about how people tend to act and about which policies tend to work under certain kinds of circumstances. In other words, in the terminology of *Being and Time*, a large part of political philosophy must be "ontic"—and neglecting the ontic level of politics leads to disastrous mistakes. When we look past policies and focus exclusively on the understanding of Being that they presuppose, we fall into political irrelevance or worse. Heidegger, for example, was misled for a while into entrusting the task of fostering the virtue of authenticity to a political authority with absolute power. Even after his disillusionment with National Socialism, Heidegger's blindness to the differences between fascism and liberalism permanently prevented him from acknowledging the evils that were specific to the Nazi regime. His position on the question of liberalism thus indicates an important absence in his thought. And perhaps we can go farther: if Heidegger is so indifferent to the differences among particular political systems, and if Being is the difference beings make to us, then has Heidegger not failed in his foremost task—to think Being?

NOTES

1. *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis), Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 65 (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989). References to this text will take the form of parenthesized page numbers.

2. A complete bibliography of the debate on Heidegger's politics would be unwieldy. I limit myself to one example: Tom Rockmore and Joseph Margolis, eds., *The Heidegger Case: On Philosophy and Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992). Although Heidegger's opposition to liberalism is mentioned several times in this excellent anthology, it is never scrutinized critically.

3. In 1951, Heidegger asks, "What is to become of a Europe that wants to rebuild itself with the stage props of those years after World War I?" He then quotes at length one of Nietzsche's attacks on liberal democracy as a symptom of decadence, including the line: "If there are to be institutions there must be a kind of will, instinct, imperative, anti-liberal to the point of malice: the will to tradition, to authority, to responsibility for centuries to come": *What Is Called Thinking?*, trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 67. In the *Spiegel* interview of 1966, Heidegger says that he is still "not convinced" that democracy offers an adequate response to technology: "Only a God Can Save Us," *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*, ed. Thomas Sheehan (Chicago: Precedent, 1981), 55.

4. I will discuss some of these signs below. For an account of them that is sympathetic to Heidegger, see Silvio Vietta, *Heideggers Kritik am Nazionalsozialismus und an der Technik* (Tübingen, Germany: Niemeyer, 1989). For an account that stresses the ambivalence of Heidegger's position and draws attention to his attack on liberalism, see Alexander Schwan, "Heidegger's *Beiträge zur Philosophie* and Politics," *Martin Heidegger: Politics, Art, and Technology*, ed. Karsten Harries and Christoph Jamme (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1994), esp. 79-80.

5. Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut document the antihumanist vogue in France and make thought-provoking criticisms of it in *French Philosophy of the Sixties: An Essay on Anti-Humanism*, trans. Mary H. S. Cattani (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990). For an instance of the Heideggerian analysis of fascism as humanism, see, for example, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art, and Politics*, trans. Chris Turner (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990), 95. Ferry and Renaut give further examples in their *Heidegger and Modernity*, trans. Franklin Philip (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), chap. 2. An American case is William V. Spanos's *Heidegger and Criticism: Retrieving the Cultural Politics of Deconstruction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993)—a book that is peppered with political analyses that depend on the Heideggerian concept of humanism. If Stephen Holmes is to be believed, the power of this concept extends far beyond avowed Heideggerians such as Spanos, for "Heidegger's influence on contemporary American antiliberals, though subterranean and indirect, is all-pervasive": "The Permanent Structure of Antiliberal Thought," *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, ed. Nancy L. Rosenblum (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 246.

6. Carl Schmitt, *Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parlamentarismus*, 2d ed. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1926), 5. The ties between Schmitt and Heidegger run deep. In particular, they share the belief that political order rests on a primordial "decision" more fundamental than any parliamentary debate: see Christian Graf von Krockow, *Die Entscheidung: Eine Untersuchung über Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt, Martin Heidegger* (Stuttgart, Germany: F. Enke, 1958). In a letter of August 22, 1933, Heidegger writes to Schmitt that Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political* "contains an approach of extraordinary significance": *Telos* 72 (Summer 1987), 132. However, any discussion of Heidegger as a "decisionist" should note that he does not view decisions as springing from the will of the subject as understood in modern philosophy.

7. *Nietzsche: Der Europäische Nihilismus, Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 48 (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Vittorio Klostermann, 1986), 213. This passage explains Heidegger's practice in the *Beiträge* of putting "liberalism" within quotation marks (pp. 25, 38, 53, 319).

8. Cf. especially *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), sec. 42 and 65.

9. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger had said of Dasein, "we *are* it, each of us, we ourselves" (p. 36). But now the meaning of the "we" has become problematic (*Beiträge*, sec. 19). It cannot refer to human beings in general, for Heidegger implies that there is no human nature, no " 'Man' in himself," but only historical man (p. 441). Dasein is in fact not the same as man but is, rather, a possibility for man (cf. pp. 455, 313). The question we must raise here is why, then, this possibility should be the normative one. If it is overly Platonic to think in terms of "goals" (*Ziele*, pp. 138, 477), how is it that Heidegger himself intends "to give historical man a goal once again" (p. 16)? The *Beiträge* themselves do not answer this question.

10. Heidegger's theme of the "leap" is clearly indebted to Kierkegaard and can be compared to Carl Schmitt's decisionism, although Heidegger would stress that his leap is not an act of subjective will. See George Kovacs, "The Leap (*der Sprung*) for Being in Heidegger's *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*," *Man and World* 25, no. 1 (1992): 39-59. Heidegger also develops the concept of a grounding leap in the opening pages of his *Introduction to Metaphysics*; I have discussed this passage in "Heidegger's Originary Leap," presented at the American Philosophical Association, May 1994.

11. "Sheltering" is illustrated by Heidegger's essays from the 1950s, such as "Building Dwelling Thinking" and "The Thing." A jug, for example, can be seen either as a mere object or as sheltering the truth of Being. As an object, it is just some matter in some shape, sitting there. But experienced more fully, it bears within it references to all the essential dimensions of significance. The jug is to be experienced as situated within a field of meaning that lets it make a difference to us. It then becomes much more than an object—it is a point at which meaningfulness itself is gathered and displayed. See "The Thing" in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 166-74.

12. On this theme, see Heidegger's discussion of the "simultaneity" of Being and beings in *Beiträge*, 13, 223, 288-89, 349.

13. Heidegger does not use the term *humanism* in the *Contributions* themselves. For his sense of the term, see "Letter on Humanism," in *Basic Writings*, 2d ed. (San Francisco: Harper, 1993), 225. We should note that Heidegger's interpretation of humanism runs contrary to the self-interpretation of many versions of humanism.

14. It seems that the crucial political "decision" in Heidegger, as in Schmitt, distinguishes friend from foe. Cf. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1976), 26.

15. Cf. Heidegger's attack on academic freedom as mere negative freedom (a favorite antiliberal trope) in his rectoral address: "The Self-Assertion of the German University," *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Wolin (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), 34.

16. Heidegger makes the same point, although he speaks of individualism rather than liberalism, in "The Age of the World Picture," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 132-33, 152. See also *Nietzsche: Der Europäische Nihilismus*, 212.

17. Of course, it can be argued that Heidegger's own position on the *Volk* constitutes a worldview itself. Heidegger subscribed to a system of ultimately unshakeable beliefs about the historical mission of the Germans—what we might call his ideal Nazism. John Caputo aptly refers to this worldview as Heidegger's mythologizing tendency: see his *Demythologizing Heidegger* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

18. Cf. *Beiträge*, 139: "that which can only be a *means* for erecting and following ends is elevated into an end itself: e.g. the *people*" and 398: only by seeking its god can a people "avoid

the danger of circling around itself, taking what are merely the conditions of its subsistence and idolizing them into its *absolute*."

19. See, in particular, "The Question Concerning Technology," *Basic Writings; What is a Thing?*, trans. W. B. Barton Jr. and Vera Deutsch (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1967); *Beiträge*, 145-59.

20. Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, pt. 2; Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B xiii. Whether this characterization of modern science is accurate is another question, even if some scientists have indeed conceived of themselves this way.

21. According to Heidegger, then, the scientific worldview itself is more deeply dangerous than the crude political misuse of science. He is still presenting this view in 1966: "What has in the meantime become of 'science,' and what is yet to become of it, is incomparably more ruinous and uncanny than the primitive declarations of National Socialism about science": letter to Erhart Kästner, March 11, 1966, in Martin Heidegger and Erhart Kästner, *Briefwechsel 1953-1974*, ed. Heinrich W. Petzet (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Insel, 1986), 84.

22. "Das Ge-Stell," *Bremer und Freiburger Vorträge, Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 79 (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Vittorio Klostermann, 1994), 27.

23. Richard Bernstein, "Heidegger's Silence," *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/ Postmodernity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992).

24. "Abendgespräch in einem Kriegsgefangenenlager in Rußland zwischen einem Jüngeren und einem Älteren," *Feldweg-Gespräche (1944/45), Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 77, ed. Ingrid Schussler (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Vittorio Klostermann, 1995). Heidegger gives the date on p. 240.

25. See especially "Abendgespräch," 216-235. This attitude is named *Gelassenheit* in the dialogue " 'Ανχιβασίη," which dates from the same period and can be found in the same volume. The language of "letting be" tends to displace the language of decision in Heidegger's writings of this period.

26. Heidegger writes of a *verblendete Irreführung*, or "blinded, erroneous leading": ibid., 206.

27. Ibid., 219-20.

28. Ibid., 233.

29. Ibid., 209.

30. Ibid., 207-8.

31. Ibid., 213.

32. Ibid., 216.

33. "Nationality is nothing but the pure subjectivity of a people": ibid., 235.

34. Ibid., 236.

35. Heidegger writes in notes related to the "Evening Dialogue" that "nothing has changed" with the war (ibid., 241), "nothing is decided by the war" (ibid., 244).

36. Ibid., 240.

37. John Rawls, for example, attempts to pursue "political liberalism" while disregarding "metaphysical liberalism": see his *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 10 and throughout. But Rawls avoids the question of the metaphysical foundations of liberalism at the cost of avoiding the very issue of whether liberalism is the best political system. He simply "start[s] within the tradition of democratic thought" (p. 18); he aims to present a theory that is "congenial to the shared notions and essential convictions implicit in the public culture of a democratic society" (p. 369). Rawls thus limits himself to systematizing (liberal) democratic opinion rather than justifying it, but he disregards the fact that democratic opinions, like all opinions, are rooted in some understanding of the good and of Being. Rawls's attempt to avoid drawing on a conception of the good has been convincingly criticized, in my view, by William

Galston in *Liberal Purposes: Goods, Virtues, and Diversity in the Liberal State* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pt. 2. Just as Rawls cannot avoid having an understanding of the good, he cannot avoid having an understanding of Being.

38. Ian Shapiro, *The Evolution of Rights in Liberal Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 275. (But Stephen Holmes argues that even Hobbes's and Locke's contract arguments are purely political, not ontological in nature, and that these thinkers did not mean to deny that individuals are necessarily embedded in social contexts: "The Permanent Structure of Antiliberal Thought," 237-39.)

39. As Ferry and Renaut point out, Heidegger himself appeals to "subjective" (though not subjectivist) phenomena when he speaks of tasks and decisions (hence, will) or discusses the unveiling of what has been covered over (hence, consciousness): *French Philosophy of the Sixties*, 149-51. (In the *Beiträge*, we could point to Heidegger's numerous discussions of "the leap"—e.g., 227ff.—and "the clearing"—e.g., 349.) Heidegger himself alerts us to the paradoxical nature of his position on will in a dialogue in which his spokesman, the "Teacher," says, "*ich will das Nicht-Wollen*": *Gelassenheit* (Pfullingen, Germany: Neske, 1959), 30. This can only mean that Heidegger wills nonsubjectivistically not to will subjectivistically. But if nonsubjectivistic willing is possible, then liberalism need not draw on a subjectivist interpretation of all volition.

40. See especially Heidegger's claim that Dasein is "in each case mine" (*Being and Time*, sec. 9), his analysis of the "they" (sec. 27), and his claim that authentic selfhood is a form of appropriating the "they" (pp. 168, 213, 312).

41. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 36 and chap. 2 in general. Taylor aptly notes that "attempts to overcome modern subjectivism" that are based on the insight that "some of the most crucial human fulfilments are not possible even in principle for a sole human being . . . are less adequately described as negations of the self than they are as ways of understanding its embedding in interlocution" (p. 527). The "case against disengaged subjectivity . . . doesn't invalidate (though it may limit the scope of) self-responsible reason and freedom" (p. 514). Elsewhere, Taylor points out that even if we settle the ontological question in favor of a "holist" conception of human beings rather than an "atomist" conception, this by no means implies that we have to discard individual rights as a matter of law and policy: "Cross-Purposes: The Liberal-Communitarian Debate," in Rosenblum, *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, 159-60.

42. Dana R. Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of the Political* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996). One of Villa's fundamental theses is that Arendt's "political theory demonstrates how important Heidegger is for thinking of action as freed from the domination of teleology, first principles, and the autonomous subject" (p. 243)—in other words, traditional metaphysics. For affinities between Arendt and liberalism, see p. 78; for her nonmetaphysical support of "democracy, constitutionalism [and] rights," see p. 89; for her reservations about liberalism, see pp. 269-70.

43. Giovanni Sartori's defense of liberalism on this score still seems valid to me, as does his elegant point that "we need freedom *from* in order to be able to achieve freedom *to*": *Democratic Theory* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1962), 286.

44. For instance, in his rectoral address, Heidegger conceives of the citizens as developing their positive freedom through various types of "service" to the state: "The Self-Assertion," 35. This concept is patterned on Plato's ideal city, in which each person has an appropriate job to perform—serving as a producer, a soldier, or a philosopher-ruler—and develops the virtue associated with that job. But in the *Republic*, Socrates tells us that such a fanciful city is primarily a model for the soul of a wise individual (443c, 592b).

45. Galston, *Liberal Purposes*, chap. 10.

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The Moment of Truth: *Augenblick* and *Ereignis* in Heidegger

HANS RUIN

In 1962 Heidegger presented a lecture with the grandiose title "Zeit und Sein," "Time and Being." This was not just the reversal of the title of his main work, but also that of the announced but never published, third section of the first part of that same work. In the lecture he develops his thoughts on the relation between time and being, and their mutual connection to the gift, and the giving and sending of the gift, of the "*Es gibt*." In some respects, Heidegger here repeats his analysis from three decades earlier; in other respects he distances himself decisively with regard to his previous position. Toward the end of his meditation he introduces a new notion, which did not appear at all in *Being and Time*, nor which would seem to have any immediate counterpart in it, namely *Ereignis* (sometimes translated as "event," sometimes as "appropriation") (*Sache* 20).[1] *Ereignis* is described as that which determines being and time in their interconnectedness; it is furthermore presented as that to which man himself belongs. It is a master concept, of which Heidegger at the same time explicitly denies that it belongs to the

[1]All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

sequence of metaphysical concepts by means of which being has been designated and understood along the history of philosophy. Partly in order to emphasize this non-belonging of *Ereignis* itself to the tradition, he adds that to *Ereignis* necessarily belongs a certain *Entzug* and *Enteignis*, a withdrawal or disappropriation (23). As is the case with truth, understood as ἀλήθεια, *Ereignis* incorporates its own non-presence and non-availability. And in fact the two key themes of truth and *Ereignis* are eventually explicitly connected in the very last paragraph of the text.

During a certain phase of the Heidegger-reception, most of his readers would have considered these thoughts to belong to a later, postwar Heidegger. We now all know that the brief remark in a footnote to the "Letter on Humanism," concerning the starting point of his new thinking, namely that it should have begun in 1936, indeed refers to a monumental effort, which is now available as *Contributions to Philosophy* (*Beiträge zur Philosophie*, GA 65), a book with precisely the subtitle "on the event" (*vom Ereignis*).[2] It is in the *Beiträge* that the thought of *Ereignis* is first attempted: "to say," as he also adds in the later remark, "the truth of being simply." It marks a renewed attempt, after the consumption of the transcendental reasoning that still governs *Being and Time*, to articulate the meaning of being as the appearing, happening, or precisely as the truth of being.

Several paths could be shown to lead to this new conception of the task of thinking. Here I want to examine one in particular, one that was never recognized by Heidegger himself, namely that which passes through his preoccupation with the notion of *Augenblick*, of *kairos*, and the idea of a "kairological critique." To this itinerary belong questions not only of time, presence, and the trace, but also, and more importantly, of the relation

[2]For the footnote in the "Letter on Humanism," cf. GA 9, page 313. A similar reference to the period 1936–38 is found in the protocol to the seminar on "Zeit und Sein," in *Zur Sache des Denkens*, page 46.

between thinking and praxis, as well as history. By approaching Heidegger from this particular angle, I also hope to address—at least implicitly—the issue of "the methods and actuality of phenomenology."[1] For two questions inevitably arise in the wake of Heidegger's thoughts on *Augenblick* and *Ereignis*: Is there a method in phenomenology, or is it—or perhaps the thinking which it implies—rather necessarily non-methodological? And what does it mean for phenomenology to be actual? Indeed, the very idea of *actuality*—as a genuine philosophical problem in itself—is what animates, or so at least I hope to show, Heidegger's preoccupation with these themes.

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Let me begin then by repeating what Heidegger has to say about the *Augenblick*, or the moment, in *Being and Time*. This means briefly rehearsing a few points in regard to his analysis of Dasein's temporality, as well as the supposedly derived form that is its historicity. In the course of his quasi-transcendental excavation of ever deeper layers of meaning projections in *Being and Time*, in the second section of the published work, Heidegger moves from the description of Dasein's "concern" (*Sorge*) to that of its temporality. Temporality, as the three-fold ek-static structure of future, past, and present (or, as he says in *Being and Time*, of "a future which makes present in the process of having been") is here presented as the limit beyond which no question concerning essences can proceed. Temporality "is" not something, it simply "temporalizes"; as such it marks the "originary projectory

[1]This text was first presented as a lecture in the context of the first meeting of the "International Phenomenological Symposium," in Urbino in 1997, whose working title was precisely "Methods and Actuality of Phenomenology." It elaborates a theme discussed in chapter 5 of my book *Enigmatic Origins: Tracing the Theme of Historicity through Heidegger's Works*.

domain." Of course, we are not speaking of time in a conventional sense, but precisely of temporality, as an existential of Dasein, which underlies all conventional timescales with the help of which human being organize their world.

On the one hand, temporality is thus introduced as the neutral, ungrounded ground of the meaning and manifestation of being. On the other, however, it is immediately stratified along the axis that runs through the entire existential analysis, namely that of the authentic and the inauthentic, or the vulgar. Dasein can live its temporality in an inauthentic mode in which it perceives its own situation as stretched out between a past that has already happened and a future that is yet to take place, independently of its own doing and existence. In this inauthentic mode the present shrinks down to only a mathematical point along a line, a miniscule limit in the course of a linear sequence.

As opposed to this conception of the present, Heidegger also outlines an authentic version, characterized by a conscious futural projection that at the same time remains open toward its own past. The name he gives to this authentic present, according to the English translation of Macquarrie and Robinson, is "the moment of vision," the *Augenblick*. Even though it has often been neglected by commentators, its importance within the overall argument of *Being and Time* can hardly be overstated. As the authentic present, the *Augenblick* is the form in which Dasein can rise above its ordinary condition within the everyday comportment of *das Man* and thus grasp the ontological significance of this very condition.

Its importance is further emphasized by the role it plays in the analysis of Dasein's historicity in the penultimate chapter of the book. As with temporality, Dasein's historicity is described as livable in two modes: the inauthentic, which approaches history passively, as somehow pushing it from behind; and the authentic, which grasps what is past in a futural mode, taking it over, repeating it for its own time, *wiederholend*. To live toward history

in this way, according to Heidegger, is to be "momentous" for one's time, to be "*augenblicklich für seine Zeit*." To put it differently, it is to have actuality. The authentically historical being assumes its own historical situation as its own destiny, and thinks and acts accordingly.

The attitude delineated in the brief remarks that Heidegger devotes to authentic historicity is one of preparedness and resolve. It anticipates a political activism that he also embraced at the time, but it is certainly not restricted to an activity in the social sphere. We should not forget that the whole program of a destruction of ontology, outlined already in the introduction to *Being and Time* and developed in a series of subsequent writings, is explicitly grounded by Heidegger in the idea of authentic historicity. To exist *augenblicklich*, to act and think from within the temporality of the *Augenblick*, is supposedly to master most fully one's own historical-philosophical situation.

Still, the notion of mastery should be used with caution in this context. For it is also a crucial aspect of this moment that it contains within itself a certain portion of non-mastery, which one could even speak of as an essential non-mastery. Temporality itself is that which cannot be mastered. It is precisely when Dasein believes itself to master time that it falls prey to an inauthentic understanding of the original phenomenon of time itself, as captured in the different chronologies through which man organizes social existence, by means of clocks, calendars, and so forth. That authentic temporality is ek-static means that it cannot be measured by, nor defined in terms of, anything else. For this reason, the *Augenblick* is also the name for a certain unpredictability and risk that characterizes human finite existence and that as such constitutes a potential source of anxiety. To affirm the momentous character of existence is thus to affirm a lack of guidelines and norms. To put it differently, it is to affirm a lack of method. Mastery, for example, in the form of critical potential, is thus paid with the price of non-mastery and of loss.

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I now want to deepen these preliminary reflections on the *Augenblick* by stepping yet further back in Heidegger's writings, to his preoccupation in the early twenties with the Greek notion of καιρός (kairos), and especially with the ideal of the kairological critic. At the root of the modern fascination for the *Augenblick*—for we are indeed speaking of a trope that is found in several philosophical writers alongside Heidegger, in Benjamin, Jaspers, and Adorno, to mention the most important of his contemporaries—we have in fact two distinct Greek concepts: that of καιρός and that of ἐξαίφνης, which could preliminarily be translated as "the right time" and "the sudden," respectively. It is Plato's reference to ἐξαίφνης, "the sudden," in *Parmenides*, which was translated by Schleiermacher as *Augenblick* and which motivated Kierkegaard's famous exposition of the difference between Greek and Christian understanding of time in *The Concept of Dread*. In this analysis Kierkegaard anticipates Heidegger's critique of the vulgar concept of time almost a century later in that he sets the linear extension of nows over and against an understanding of the *Augenblick* (in Danish, *Øieblik*) as the time of historical freedom, of an enigmatic and incalculable passage.

It was not, however, to Kierkegaard and the dialectical problem of the sudden that Heidegger would turn in his first steps toward a thinking of the *Augenblick*. Instead we find him elaborating at first what was also, indirectly, an important source to Kierkegaard, namely, the letters of Paul. In a lecture series in 1921, whose official subject matter was the phenomenology of religion, he exposes a supposedly unique and original self-explication found in the earliest Christian documents, an elaboration of man's factical historical existence that is very similar to what Heidegger himself was about to develop. It is characterized as an attitude of awakedness and resolve. The key concept in this discussion is that of καιρός, the moment—more specifically

the right or the decisive moment—which he takes directly from the writings of Paul, where it has of course an explicit eschatological meaning. In a very Kierkegaardian manner, Heidegger there sets early Christianity over and against the Greeks when it comes to the understanding of existential and historical time.[4]

In sharp contrast to this critical assessment of the Greeks in 1921, we find a very different approach a year later in the famous *Natorp-Bericht*, the manuscript on the interpretation of Aristotle, that was found and published as late as 1989. Here he lays stress on the significant fact that Aristotle himself, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, characterizes the virtue of φρόνησις by means of καιρός. To practice φρόνησις, to manifest good sense and judgment in human affairs, is to have the capacity to act at the right moment. This ability does not follow from any general and extrahistorical rules, deducible by reason alone. On the contrary, it is manifested in every specific situation. In this respect, the virtuous man is one who acts from within the moment. Heidegger does not state it quite so explicitly. In fact, he ultimately ends up criticizing Aristotle—as well as the entire previous tradition, Christianity included—for having lost track of authentic temporality. Still it is significant in itself that he here suggests a reading of the *Nicomachean Ethics* along the lines of his own existential analytic in the making and that he indeed translates the Aristotelian καιρός as *Augenblick*, thus fusing it with his own analysis of authentic temporality and historicity.

An overall goal of his thinking during this period is to develop a phenomenological description of factical life, partly as a goal in itself, but ultimately in the interest of displaying the roots and

[4]This material was recently published as GA 60 *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*. It was discussed previously by several writers who have had access to the unpublished material. Cf., e.g., Pöggeler, pages 36–38, and Sheehan, pages 56–57.

origin of theoretical thinking and the theoretical attitude. A presupposition throughout these early years is that it is only by coming to terms with its own non-theoretical existential foundation that theoretical thinking itself can avoid reproducing its alienating effects. It is in the course of this attempt that he pushes Aristotle's remarks on the non-generalizable nature of φρόνησις one step further, stating that even the ἀρχή, the general principle, is what it is only in relation to the *Augenblick* ("Phänomenologische" 259).

The link to Aristotle and his ethical writings, however ambiguous on Heidegger's part, permits us to see how, at the very outset of his attempts to develop an analysis of existential temporality, the qualified present designated by the *Augenblick* is never just the abstract present of ontological illumination, but a moment essentially inscribed in an ethical, a political, and a critical context. This is illustrated, for example, by Heidegger's remark in his early Marburg lectures on Aristotle where he speaks of the need to adopt a "kairological-critical" attitude to one's own time (GA 61: 41). The formulation occurs within the context of a discussion of how to come to terms with the philosophical present, and what this requires in terms of a productive relation to the past. In short, it occurs within a discussion of the actuality of thinking, how to achieve actuality and relevance. The kairological attitude, what *Being and Time* five years later will speak of as "existing momentaneously for one's time," is a program of destructive retrieval which seeks actuality in the present through a combination of historical critique and new thinking through destruction and construction, as the formula reads in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (GA 24: 31).

The premise for such a program, which in itself is as abstract and interchangeable as the moment to which it refers, is that philosophical thinking cannot rely on eternal concerns or principles; yet it must still not fall prey to cultural and epistemological relativism. It is not a question of simply eliciting eternal truths

and values from the present, as though it contained scattered traces of eternity, but rather of entering more deeply into the present, of making the present—or presence as such—into a philosophical problem. This is how Heidegger expresses it himself, in a lecture series on the hermeneutics of facticity from 1923 (GA 63: 42). Only as such is philosophical truth achieved and preserved. The full implications, as well as aporias, of this intellectual-critical program cannot be expounded in a short presentation. Here I state only its explicit aims, in order to indicate the weight that is gathered around the notions of καιρός and *Augenblick*. By the time Heidegger composes *Being and Time*, he no longer speaks of καιρός, nor of the kairological, but only of the *Augenblick* and what is *augenblicklich*. But the concerns that animated his earlier use of this concept prevail.

What, then, happens with these concerns in the subsequent writings? As is the case with several among the key notions in *Being and Time*, the concept of *Augenblick* eventually disappears from Heidegger's philosophical vocabulary. But this disappearance is only gradual, and it goes by way of a transformation that we need to grasp if we are to respond appropriately to Heidegger's later thinking. For as my title and introduction indicated, I believe that it is in the thought of *Ereignis* that we should recognize the continuation of the preoccupation with the *Augenblick* and the kairological in Heidegger's early writings.

The most telling text in this respect is *Contributions to Philosophy*. For in this work *Augenblick* and *Ereignis* live side by side, illuminating one another, blending into one another. In passing, one can note how, as late as 1949, Heidegger formulates in retrospect the ambition of his new path. I am referring to the above mentioned footnote to the "Letter on Humanism" in which he spoke of the attempt "to say the truth of being simply." To this he adds that this was attempted "in the moment," *im Augenblick* (note, however, that it is here placed within quotation marks). I read this remark as an important pointer toward

something that also reverberates throughout *Contributions to Philosophy*, namely that it is a work preoccupied with the situation and the situatedness of philosophical thinking itself. It is, one could say, Heidegger's most radical attempt at kairological writing. It is an attempt to confront and speak out from the present historical situation, in order ultimately to transform and transcend it.

In one of the introductory sections to *Contributions to Philosophy* Heidegger speaks precisely of the need to actualize the historical moment (*Augenblick*) that is marked by the consumption of all previous metaphysical efforts. Their common failure is defined as the inability to draw man into the basic relation with beings. Throughout the book this theme is echoed: that the next step in the thinking of being is to disclose the belonging of man and of his thinking to that which he seeks to think. The task is not to add new determinations to being, but to reveal the dependence on being of thinking and language in general, or rather, to enable an experience of this dependency. To perform this task is to step into the *Ereignis*, a name for being to the extent that it gives itself precisely as that to which the thinker belongs.

This step is not something that can simply be performed according to a specific method. It is something that is granted to the thinker, or poet, who have experienced the need and cultivated the question. In section 255 these qualified situations are also presented as the *Augenblick*, in which "being flashes forth" and in which truth unfolds. The image of lightning, as well as that of need and preparation, belong to what we could call a kairological rhetoric, a rhetoric of urgency and crisis. It dramatizes the situation of knowledge and truth as a situation about to undergo a radical transformation, reversal, or decision.

But the thought of *Ereignis* is not just the adequate response to the dramatical and dramatized historical moment of thinking. In a deeper sense, I read it as a philosophical refiguration of this moment itself. On a few occasions Heidegger suggests such a

connection himself. In the context of a discussion of space and time in *Contributions to Philosophy*, section 239, he insists that space-time must be reflected from out of the "*Augenblicks-stätte*" of Da-sein, its "momentary-places." The remark is partly in line with the analysis in *Being and Time*, even though it points to the later thinking in that it accords an irreducible role to spatiality. What is important here, however, is that in the same section he states that this existential origin of time-space corresponds to the unicity of being as *Ereignis*. As we learned from *Being and Time*, the *Augenblick* is the temporal mode that does not fit into the linear structure of chronological time, which it both shatters and gathers. Likewise, *Ereignis* belongs outside or beyond the generality of time and space, as well as every organized ontological conceptuality.

Another indication of the proximity between these two key concepts is the curious correlation of *Ereignis* and *Er-äugnis* that is mentioned in several later texts, such as "Der satz der Identität." There he speaks of the *Er-eignen* as in fact an *er-äugnen*, that is an *er-blicken* (*Identität* 28–29). These somewhat elusive indications should make us attentive to the underlying philosophical motivation that brings these two themes together. For they do indeed emerge from what we could perhaps describe—borrowing a term from Heidegger himself—as a common philosophical basic *Stimmung*.

Ereignis is a key-word in Heidegger's later thinking, in which the question of the meaning of being is transformed into a question of the essencing and truth of being. It seeks to capture the "happening" or "event" of being in manifestation, while repeatedly insisting that it is not some kind of process-philosophy. Its way of signifying has its roots in what I have spoken of here as a "kairological" mode of thinking and writing, for which the experience of truth is bound and conditioned by a confrontation with the unique situation of which we ourselves are a part; or rather, a situation to which we belong while we are also constantly being deprived of it and to which we can therefore relate only as to an unexpected encounter.

The thought of *Ereignis* thus elaborates the conception in the early writings and lectures of that existential factical situation out of which every general description and designation of beings emerges, including the spatio-temporal structure itself. In *Being and Time* the name for this qualified situation is the *Augenblick*. Though seemingly restricted to a temporal singularity, we should not fail to keep in mind that it is modeled on the situation of historical existence and praxis. Factical Dasein is always already thrown into a historical situation, forced to act and to think from out of its given conditions. The *Augenblick* is what we could perhaps speak of as the metonomy for this incessant, demanding situatedness of human existence. It designates that to which we can have access only by means of a certain abandonment. Or to put it differently, it designates that which we have only in losing it, as we devote ourselves to what the situation requires.

What kind of concept is the *Augenblick*? We know how to deal with it because it occupies a definite position within the lucid architectonic of *Being and Time*, as the name for authentic temporality and historicity. But when we approach it, it nevertheless tends to slip away—not for dialectical reasons, as the Aristotelian now, but precisely because it pretends to escape this inherited logic of temporality altogether. It claims to name a present that is not the present of the now-point, nor the extended Husserlian present of retention and protention, but a constitutive present out of which the temporal scheme can emerge as such. Such a present is not and can never be present. As a locus of decision and authentic resolve, it nevertheless withdraws from conceptual reach.

This logic of withdrawal and restraint is not made explicit by Heidegger in connection with the *Augenblick*, even though it is implied by the way it operates in his thinking. It is only in the thought of *Ereignis* that this curious mode of being and of signifying is made into a theme in itself. *Ereignis* is also *Enteignis*,. it is withdrawal and disappropriation. It is a basic concept that disavows the idea of conceptual hierarchy; it is a name for the

origin, yet does not designate anything. What kind of a word is it? What kind of understanding, indeed, what kind of thinking and reasoning does it encourage us to perform? It seems to hold out a promise for those who are prepared to seek out the limit of discursive thought, as it pretends to name the very element of thinking, of understanding, and of truth.

The elusiveness of this key concept is a symptom, I would say, of a more general problem in Heidegger's later philosophy. It is clearly a philosophy driven forward by an increasing sense of frustration with inherited terminology. As he strives to deepen his reflections, he also moves into a territory that borders on the ineffable and ultimately on silence. The logic of such a development is not difficult to discern, even though its content—for necessary reasons—must become ever more opaque. That is the paradox of "wanting to say the truth of being simply."

The problem, however, arises at the point where this thinking is received. There is always the risk that it is made the object, not of thinking, but of devotion. Words such as *Ereignis* can easily become part of a new philosophical liturgy, devoid of precisely the spirit that once motivated their coinage. For this reason reconstructions of Heidegger's path, such as the one presented here, are of importance. The reading suggested here seeks to activate the roots of his thought in order to return it to us as living matter.

The theme of *Augenblick* and *Ereignis* also has a more specific significance in this respect. It forces us to deal with an issue that remains a source of profound uncertainty and ambivalence in Heidegger's work, namely, the more precise relation between Greek and Judaeo-Christian elements in the thinking of being. In the thought of *Ereignis*, read through the prism of the early interest in the kairological, we can experience the temporality of revelation and of grace, as well as that of historical finitude and praxis. To think through this issue is thus also to force oneself to debate these two pillars not only in Heidegger's thinking, but in modern philosophy at large. Finally, the importance of reading

the notion of *Ereignis* from the perspective of the *Augenblick* is to restore something of the uncertainty and undecidability that characterizes genuine thinking at the end of metaphysics, and thus to see how the historical and linguistic contingency of thinking is not just a new philosophical dogma, but indeed a name for the need to continue the task, that is—to assume one's moment.

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HEIDEGGER'S GOD

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THE QUESTION OF Heidegger's God is normally treated as a supplement, a hanging thread at the edge of the weave of his work. Why should we be concerned with Heidegger's God? Which is to say, is the question of Heidegger's God simply an internal question about Heidegger's thought, or is something else at stake? What is at issue here can to some extent be explained by Karl Löwith's persistent accusation that Heidegger had supplanted God with "being,"[1] which is tantamount to saying that in contradistinction to Scholasticism, which appeared to be saying that God and being are the same, for Heidegger, being and God are the same—what's the difference? Löwith even goes so far as to suggest that Heidegger is nothing other than a latter-day Scotist.[2] The question may be asked in a more sophisticated form as to what extent is Heidegger still in dialogue with the Christian tradition which arises out of Scholasticism and can it be in any sense clarified by trying to understand better Heidegger's God?

Yet in considering the place of God, or the God, gods, and *die Göttlichen* (let us leave this term untranslated for now) as supplemental in Heidegger's work, already a *decision* has been made, a forcing of Heidegger's God on to the margin. If I do not believe in God myself (or if I do, and know the God well in

[1] *Heidegger—Denker in dürftiger Zeit* (1953; rev. ed. [1960] published in *Sämtliche Schriften*, Band 8 [Stuttgart: Metzler, 1984]; English translation in *Martin Heidegger, European Nihilism*, ed. Richard Wolin [New York: Columbia, 1995]).

[2] Ibid. Cf. the footnote on p. 139 (p. 254 of the English text) which refers to pp. 348-51 of Heidegger's 1916 Habilitationsschrift, *Die Kategorien- und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus*, published in *Frühe Schriften* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1972).

whom I believe—too well, after all, to let him be touched by this Heidegger) then why should I concern myself with Heidegger's God? Let me instead speak of Heidegger's phenomenology, or politics, or what have you. Commentators who try to make sense of the "later" Heidegger's fourfold (earth, heaven, mortals and *die Göttlichen*) almost always leave unexplained just what might be meant by *die Göttlichen*, whereas the origin of the other three can be traced in say, φύσις (earth), or the analytic of *Dasein* (mortals), or transcendence (heaven).

But didn't Heidegger himself decide this question? Is it not he who forces God on to the margin of his work? Does he not say in a lecture course as early as 1925, "Philosophical research is and remains atheism"?[3] And does this not mean we need worry no longer about Heidegger's God?

Overwhelmed with confidence, we know in advance what is meant (in this case, by Heidegger, but indeed by anyone) by "God" and "atheism" and "philosophical research." For Heidegger does not *only* say in these lectures "philosophical research is and remains atheism." This particular phrase "philosophical research" occurs towards the end of a passage that is strictly concerned with phenomenological intentionality. Philosophical research is, therefore, phenomenological intentionality, whatever that might be. It is, Heidegger says, a "new research." This new research, he tells us, "is explained by defining it in retrospect from the past situation of philosophy." So what we heard initially—that all philosophical research is atheism—which seemingly spoke to us as if it had always been this way, proves not to be perennial, but to be something new.

Why might atheism belong to phenomenology? Further on, Heidegger says "Philosophy becomes what a great man once called the 'joyful science.'" In the German text the phrase "joyful science," "*Fröhliche Wissenschaft*" is capitalized. The great man is Nietzsche, whose *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* tells the story of the madman's proclamation of the death of God. In other words, phenomenology, this atheism, can and does come about only after

[3] Published as *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs, Gesamtausgabe Band 20* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1979), 109f. (English translation by T. Kisiel, *History of the Concept of Time (Prolegomena)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 79.

Nietzsche and what he tells as the proclamation of the death of God. The 1925 passage is entitled "The Self-Understanding of Phenomenology . . .". In other words, this discovery of the meaning and direction of philosophical research as something new and something atheistic comes about in consequence of a particular self-understanding, a coming to the self and putting of the self into question which phenomenology yields.

If something at least can now be said about the meaning of "philosophical research," it remains unclear what "atheism" means. About the only meaning that can be ruled out is that Heidegger was or is what is meant by the commonplace term "an atheist." In 1925, long before the lectures on Nietzsche of 1937-44, where, it is said, Heidegger *first* elaborated his understanding of the *Seinsgeschichte*, the "History of Being." and *before* the so-called turn out of the structural analytic of *Dasein* towards being as such, Heidegger is already unfolding the place of God within the context of an historical enquiry into what he himself constitutes as *the* philosophical tradition, precisely because Nietzsche has proclaimed the death of God. In other words, what many commentators claim that Heidegger is doing in the later, wartime and post-war work (as against his earlier work) he is already doing in outline even before the publication of *Being and Time*.[4] What does this mean? Immediately, there is no "later Heidegger" (and by implication, no hermeneutic "turn" from the structural analytic of *Dasein* to the analysis of being as such) as far as what "later" has normally been taken to indicate.

So much of the interpretation of Heidegger's God has hinged on the transformations claimed to be constantly underway in his

[4] An example of this interpretation can be found in Michel Haar's *Critical Remarks on Heidegger's Reading of Nietzsche*, in *Critical Heidegger*, ed. Christopher McCann (London: Routledge, 1996), 121-33. Haar suggests that Heidegger's elaboration of Nietzsche as a negative theologian is in consequence of the Nietzsche lectures after his analysis there of the Eternal Return and the will to power. In similar vein John Caputo traces Heidegger's opposition to Catholic students in Freiburg to his becoming an "enthusiastic reader of Nietzsche" while simultaneously putting aside "Kierkegaard, Aristotle and Luther," and proposes a still further shift in the post-war years where Heidegger is said to become "anti-Nietzschean" (see "Heidegger and Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles Guignon [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993], 277, 281). I remain unconvinced that Heidegger's Nietzsche interpretation underwent these particular alterations.

thought, particularly in the period prior to 1933 and his engagement with Nazism, again in the period up to 1945, and again in the postwar years. In short, there has been a persistent attempt to relate Heidegger's God to Heidegger's politics. I want to say no more than that this is not as straightforward as it seems, and that the transformations claimed are being read into these texts, and do not explain them. What if Heidegger's God underwent no transformation, but simply for Heidegger to speak of God was a ceaseless struggle with something that eluded saying?

I. God and Being in Metaphysics

But is not Heidegger's personal atheism revealed in his sustained anti-Christian polemic, peppering his works prior to the Second World War? Here do we not find sharp-tongued comments like "a 'Christian philosophy' is a round square and a misunderstanding"?[5] Five years later Heidegger repeats this figure and extends it: "Square and circle are at least compatible in that they are both geometrical figures, while Christian faith and philosophy remain fundamentally different."[6] It is not faith and philosophy that are set in an opposition, but *Christian* faith and any *Christian* philosophy. Heidegger's anti-Christian polemic sets into a new light the three terms "faith" (*der Glaube*), "philosophy," and "theology." How is faith differentiated from these latter two, and in what place do these latter stand?

Heidegger's critique of Christianity always relies on a distinction between faith and metaphysics. For Heidegger, "theology" hitherto belongs firmly within the realm of metaphysics, hence his

[5] "Eine 'christliche Philosophie ist ein hölzernes Eisen und ein Mißverständnis" (Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* [Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1953], 6; English translation by R. Manheim, *An Introduction to Metaphysics* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959], 7). The published text is of a lecture course of the same title given in 1935.

[6] "Viereck und Kreis kommen noch darin überein, daß sie räumliche Gebilde sind, während christlicher Glaube und Philosophie abgründig verschieden bleiben" (from the 1940 lecture series *Der Europäische Nihilismus*, in *Nietzsche* [Pfullingen: Neske, 1961], 2:132; English translation by David F. Krell, *Nietzsche by Martin Heidegger*, vol. 4 [San Francisco: Harper Torchbooks, 1979]).

elaboration of the term "*onto-theo-logy*" in his 1936 lectures on Schelling,[7] a term he will repeat in key texts until the end.[8] He even goes so far as to name what is normally understood by the word "theology" as "theiology," a term later taken up by Jean-Luc Marion.[9] The anti-Christian polemic in Heidegger's work is strictly concerned with his critique of metaphysics and not at all with Heidegger's God.

How can we understand this? For Heidegger the metaphysical position concerning God is that being and God are the same: "Deus est suum esse." The word *onto-theo-logy* says no more than this. What does it mean for God and being to be the same? Heidegger says that God as being is the thought of "beings as a whole," construed as what gives being to beings, what is most "being-ful" about them. He draws a distinction between a metaphysical construal of being in this way—which is *Seiendheit*, "being-ness," the being-ness of beings (*die Seienden*) and so remains *a* being—and *das Sein*, being itself (which is not *a* being). He adds:

> Every philosophy is theology in the original and essential sense that the conceiving (λόγος) of beings as a whole asks about the ground of Being, and this ground becomes named as θεός, God. Indeed, Nietzsche's philosophy, for

[7] Later published as *Schellings Abhandlung über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit (1809)*; English translation by Joan Stambaugh, *Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom* (Ohio University Press, 1985). Also published under the same title as volume 42 of the Heidegger *Gesamtausgabe* in a re-edited form (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1988).

[8] In particular in the 1942-43 seminar published in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1950) as *Hegels Begriff der Erfahrung*; in the 1949 *Einleitung* to the 1929 lecture on the nothing, *das Nichts*, entitled *Was ist Metaphysik?* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1949); in *Identität und Differenz* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1957); and in *Kants These über das Sein* (published separately the following year; Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1963).

[9] "Die erste Philosophie ist als Ontologie zugleich die Theologie des wahrhaft Seienden. Genauer wäre sie die Theiologie zu nennen. Die Wissenschaft des Seienden als solchen ist in sich onto-theologisch" (Heidegger, *Hegels Begriff der Erfahrung*, 190; English translation by Kenley Royce Dove, *Hegel's Concept of Experience* [New York: Harper, 1970]). Jean-Luc Marion appropriated the term in his work *Dieu sans l'être* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1981), 96.

instance, in which an essential saying states "God is dead" is in accord with this saying "Theology."[10]

In the whole history of metaphysics "beings as a whole" is for Heidegger always thought as "God." The ontological question of metaphysics considers beings "as such," whereas the theological question of metaphysics considers beings "as a whole," or in general. We move within the frame of what is most particular and what is most universal. Philosophy in the widest sense then, "is *ontotheology*. The more originally it is both in one, the more authentically is it philosophy."[11] Note that for Heidegger all that is under consideration is beings—either as a whole or in particular. So even when we are treating this topic in relation to God, nothing more is actually being said about God than that God is "beings as a whole." In other words this is an enquiry solely determined by what we find in the world, and allows for nothing outside it. It *already* is solely factical. So far from Heidegger being the champion of a Nihilism that disbars anything beyond the purely phenomenal, the purely factical, Heidegger's accusation is that metaphysics is already this facticity and Nihilism.

While the distinct term "onto-theo-logy" seems to make its first appearance only in 1936 (in relation to Kant in particular), Heidegger claims that he had worked out the perspective it names much earlier, and that the whole of the 1929 lecture *Was ist Metaphysik?* was written with this perspective in view.[12] Indeed in the opening sections of the so-called "Kantbuch" (from a lecture series given in 1927-28) Heidegger uses Baumgarten's 1743 distinction "Ad metaphysicam referuntur ontologia,

[10] "Jede Philosophie ist Theologie in dem ursprünglichen und wesentlichen Sinne, daß das Begreifen (λόγος) des Seienden im Ganzen nach dem Grunde des Seyns fragt und dieser Grund θεός, Gott, genannt wird. Auch Nietzsches Philosophie z.B., darin ein wesentlicher Satz lautet 'Gott ist tot', ist eben gemäß diesem Satz 'Theologie'" (Heidegger, *Schellings Abhandlung*, 61).

[11] "Philosophie ist *Ontotheologie*. Je ursprünglicher sie beides in einem ist, um so eigentlicher ist sie Philosophie" (ibid., 62).

[12] Martin Heidegger, "Einleitung," in *Was ist Metaphysik?* in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1967), 208-10. This introduction was first added to the fifth published edition of the original 1929 lecture in 1949 (see note 7 above).

cosmologia, psychologia et theologia naturalis,"[13] where *metaphysica generalis* refers to ontology, or beings in their generality, "'*das Seiende allgemeinen*' (ens commune)," and *metaphysica specialis* to "Theology (the object of which is the *summum ens*), Cosmology, and Psychology." Metaphysics as taken over by Kant is then summarized as that which has for its object "beings in general and the highest being."[14]

What then of faith? Heidegger's published answer to this question is always in specific relation to the asking of the *Seinsfrage*, the question of being (*das Sein*). The question "What is metaphysics?" leads to the question that overcomes metaphysics, the "most original" (*ursprünglichste*), the "widest" and "deepest," and most "self-displacingly-self-questioning" (*sich auf sich stellenden Fragen*), Leibniz's question "Why are there beings rather than nothing?"[15] This question is answered "even before it is asked" by anyone "for whom the Bible is divine revelation and truth. Everything that is not itself God, is created through him. God himself 'is' as the uncreated creator."[16] Does this therefore mean that "faith" and the "faith-ful" are closed off from the *Seinsfrage*? No—because faith in the Bible as divine revelation and truth (as *doctrina*) is not "faith."

[13] "To metaphysics is referred ontology, cosmology, psychology and natural theology" (Martin Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik. Fünfte, vermehrte Auflage* [Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1973], §1, pp. 3-6). First published under the same title in the series *Max Scheler zum Gedächtnis* XII 236 (Bonn, 1929) as the reworking of a lecture course given at Marburg in the winter semester of 1927-28. The fifth (1973) edition is an emended and expanded version of the first; English translation by Richard Taft, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

[14] "Metaphysik . . . Da sie das Seiende im allgemeinen und das höchste Seiende zum Gegenstand hat" (ibid., §1, esp. p. 9).

[15] "Warum ist überhaupt Seiendes und nicht vielmehr Nichts?" This question (which concludes the lecture *Was ist Metaphysik?*, is investigated thoroughly in the 1935 lecture series *Einführung in die Metaphysik* and forms the basis of Heidegger's last official lecture series at Freiburg in 1956, published as *Der Satz vom Grund* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1957; English translation by Reginald Lilly, *The Principle of Reason* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991]).

[16] "Wenn z.B. die Bibel göttliche Offenbarung und Wahrheit ist, der hat vor allem Fragen der Frage 'Warum ist überhaupt Seiendes und nicht vielmehr nichts?' schon die Antwort: Das Seiende, soweit es nicht Gott selbst ist, ist durch diesen geschaffen. Gott selbst 'ist' als der ungeschaffene Schöpfer" (Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 5).

Anyone who stands in the soil of such faith . . . can only act 'as if . . .'. But on the other hand is that faith which, if it does not remain constantly in the possibility of unfaith [*Unglaubens*], is no faith, but only a convenience and a set-up to hold fast to a commonly accepted doctrine. That is neither faith nor questioning, but the indifference of those who can busy themselves with everything, even with faith as in much the same way they do with questioning.[17]

Faith defined as dogmatic teaching, or biblical revelation as "doctrinal" truth, is the commonest, cheapest form of metaphysics. Here Heidegger simply restates Nietzsche's taunt that Christianity is just "Platonism for the masses."[18]

Faith as determined to unfaith is "a thinking and questioning working through of the Christian experiencing of the world, i.e. of faith. That is then theology"[19]—which cannot decide the *Seinsfrage* in advance, and which is therefore not a part of metaphysics. Theology as *this* science of faith and the *Seinsfrage* may (but need not) occur together. The one does not abolish the other, nor do they stand in an opposition. This interpretation is so much in opposition to the way this passage (and others) is read by certain commentators that it demands closer scrutiny.[20]

Why and in what way is "Theology" as normally understood metaphysics? I have already indicated how for Heidegger the posing of God as both "not-creation" and as "uncreated creator" decides in advance any answer to the *Seinsfrage*. Heidegger wishes

[17] "Wer auf dem Boden solchen Glaubens steht . . . Er kann nur so tun, als ob . . . Aber andererseits ist jener Glaube, wenn er sich nicht ständig der Möglichkeit des Unglaubens aussetzt, auch kein Glauben, sondern eine Bequemlichkeit und eine Verabredung mit sich, künftig an der Lehre als einem irgendwie Überkommenen festzuhalten. Das ist dann weder Glauben noch Fragen, sondern Gleichgültigkeit, die sich nunmehr mit allem, vielleicht sogar sehr interessiert, beschäftigen kann, mit dem Glauben ebenso wie mit dem Fragen" (ibid.).

[18] Heidegger cites this himself (ibid., 80).

[19] "Zwar gibt es eine denkend fragende Durcharbeitung der christlich erfahrenen Welt, d.h. des Glaubens. Das ist dann Theologie" (ibid., 6).

[20] I have indicated, for instance, how very differently John Caputo interprets the remarks that are made in the lecture course *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (see *Heidegger and Theology*, esp. 276, 278f.). Caputo does not seem to acknowledge the difference between Christian faith and Christianity (*die Kirchenlehre*) as an attempt at a system of metaphysics; he interprets Heidegger as being hostile toward both. See also John Macquarrie's remarks concerning these passages in *Heidegger and Christianity* (London: SCM, 1994), the published text of a lecture series he gave in 1993 and 1994, esp. 54ff.

to exclude any suggestion that the words "In the beginning God created heaven and earth" are in any sense an answer to that questioning which is the *Seinsfrage*. He concludes, "Quite aside from whether these words from the Bible are true or false for faith, they can supply no answer to our question because they are in no way related to it";[21] to faith such questions are foolishness (a biblical point he will repeat in 1949 in the *Einleitung* added to the lecture *Was ist Metaphysik?*).[22] For Heidegger the question has clearly to do with the origin of beings, which metaphysically is understood to be the problem of causes (as I shall later illustrate). The passages here examined in the 1935 *Einführung* lectures that deal with God, faith, and theology come directly after a consideration of the "ground" (*der Ur-sprung*). Metaphysics either thinks God as first cause or correspondingly as ground. For this reason the very raising of the *Seinsfrage* which pushes towards overcoming metaphysics displaces understanding God as ground because it involves a "leap" (*Sprung*) which reveals the real meaning of the word "origin" (*der Ur-sprung*). "We call such a leap, which opens up its own source, the original-source or origin, the finding of one's own ground."[23] The leap is, therefore, a leap into finding oneself in question—the coming to the self that phenomenology yields.

Metaphysics begins by positing God as first cause, as ground, as highest being. That which is grounded, which is not-God, is *ens creatum*, created things. To create, therefore, is to ground. Heidegger notes that for the medieval, "The being of beings [*das Sein des Seienden*] consists in their being-created by God (*Omne ens est ens creatum*)."[24] In the modern period the ground first becomes obscure (in Kant), then becomes subjectivity as such in

[21] "Ganz abgesehen davon, ob dieser Satz der Bibel für den Glauben wahr oder unwahr ist, er kann überhaupt keine Antwort auf unsere Frage darstellen, weil er auf diese Frage keine Bezug hat" (Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 6).

[22] In *Wegmarken*, 208, quoting 1 Corinthians 1:20: "οὐκι ἐμῶπανεν ὁ Θεός την σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμον."

[23] "Einen solchen sich als Grund er-springenden Sprung nennen wir gemäß der echten Bedeutung des Wortes einen Ur-sprung: das Sich-den-Grund-er-springen" (Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 5).

[24] "Das Sein des Seienden besteht in seinem Geschaffensein durch Gott (omne ens est ens creatum)" (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 2:132).

valuation in which the ground becomes the certitude of being-human (*ens certum*),[25] and culminates in Nietzsche's eternal recurrence of the same.

As an *ontology*, even Nietzsche's metaphysics is *at the same time* theology, although it seems far removed from scholastic metaphysics. The ontology of beings as such thinks *essentia* as will to power. Such ontology thinks the *existentia* of beings as such and as a whole theologically as the eternal recurrence of the same. Such metaphysical theology is of course a negative theology of a peculiar kind. Its negativity is revealed in the expression "God is dead." That is an expression not of atheism but of Onto-Theology, in that metaphysics in which Nihilism proper is fulfilled.[26]

All of this comes about in consequence of onto-theo-logy, that is, theology thought metaphysically.

A) The meaning of "esse" in Aquinas and Heidegger

It should be clear from what has preceded that for Heidegger the *Seinsgeschichte*, or history of being, can be construed as unfolding a history of God, thought metaphysically. A critical juncture in this history is the way in which God is thought in medieval metaphysics. When, therefore, in Zürich in 1951 Heidegger is asked "need being and God be posited as identical?,"

[25] Cf. Descartes, *Meditationes de prima philosophia*, in *Œuvres de Descartes*, ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (Paris: Vrin), 7:27 (*Meditatio secunda*): "Cogitare? Hic invenio: cogitatio est; hic sola a me divelli nequit. Ego sum, ego existo, certum est. . . . Nihil nunc admitto nisi quod necessario sit verum; sum igitur precise tantum res cogitans, id est, mens, sive animus, sive intellectus, sive ratio, voces mihi prius significationis ignote. Sum autem res vera et vera existens; sed qualis res? Dixi, cogitans." See Heidegger, *Nietzsche* 2:166: "Im Herrschaftsbereich dieses subiectum ist das ens nicht mehr ens creatum, es ist ens certum: indubitandum: vere cogitatum: 'cogitatio'." Cf. also Heidegger's discussion of the *ens certum* in relation to Descartes in *Hegels Begriff der Erfahrung*, 143f.

[26] "Auch Nietzsches Metaphysik ist *als Ontologie*, obzwar sie weit von der Schulmetaphysik entfernt zu sein scheint, *zugleich* Theologie. Die Ontologie des Seienden als solche denkt die essentia als den Willen zur Macht. Diese Ontologie denkt die existentia des Seienden als solchen im Ganzen theologisch als die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen. Diese metaphysische Theologie ist allerdings eine negative Theologie eigener Art. Ihre Negativität zeigt sich in dem Wort: Gott ist tot. Das ist nicht das Wort des Atheismus, sondern das Wort der Onto-Theologie derjenigen Metaphysik, in der sich der eigentliche Nihilismus vollendet" (Heidegger, *Nietzsche* 2:348, from a text composed in 1944-46 and published in 1961 as *Die seinsgeschichtliche Bestimmung des Nihilismus*).

he replies, referring specifically to St. Thomas Aquinas, "God and being is not identical. . . . . being and God are not identical, and I would never attempt to think the essence of God through being. . . . If I were yet to write a theology—to which I sometimes feel inclined—then the word 'being' would not occur in it."[27] There is no syntactical error here; the move from "is" to "are" is the very movement of Heidegger's thinking through the separation of being and God from their metaphysically posited togetherness.

To fail to understand the meaning of the polemic, the sheer violence of Heidegger's desire to break with metaphysics (whilst at the same time paying it the deepest respect) leads, for instance, Jean-Luc Marion to argue in explaining this very passage that "A single indication comes to us: the word Being must not intervene in a theological discourse."[28]

Once again, that is not what Heidegger says here—or rather, that is not all that he says here. Heidegger speaks of the essence of God while wishing to exclude from the discussion of this essence the word *being, existence*. Heidegger is saying here nothing other than that all theology has been onto-theo-logy, that God and being are the same, *metaphysics*, and that he, Heidegger, would not speak of the essence of God in the terms of being—existence—and that *for him* (Heidegger) to undertake theology would be to say—before we had even begun to undertake a theology—"The essence of God and God's existence are not the same." This does not disbar the word "being" from theological discourse, but sets it in its proper place. In this sense the separating of the thought of the essence of God from any "proofs" or discussion of God's existence is the same thing as the overcoming of metaphysics.

Heidegger is speaking in the context of an explicit reference to Aquinas. He adds that he knows a Jesuit whom he has asked

[27] "DRITTE FRAGE: Dürfen Sein und Gott identisch gesetzt werden? . . . HEIDEGGER: . . . Gott und Sein ist nicht identisch. . . . Sein und Gott sind nicht identisch, und ich würde niemals versuchen, das Wesen Gottes durch das Sein zu denken. . . . Wenn ich noch eine Theologie schreiben würde, wozu es mich manchmal reizt, dann dürfte in ihr das Wort 'Sein' nicht vorkommen" (Martin Heidegger, *Seminare*, Gesamtausgabe Band 15 [Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1986], 436).

[28] Marion, *Dieu sans l'être*, 95; English translation by D. Tracy, *God Without Being (Hors Texte)* (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1991), 63.

repeatedly "to show me the place in Thomas Aquinas where he says what '*esse*' specifically means and what the proposition means that says '*Deus est suum esse*'. I have to this day received no answer."[29] This phrase is from Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 3, a. 4: "whether essence and existence are the same in God." He responds, "Therefore God is his own existence, and not merely his own essence."[30] Aquinas believes that the identity of the existence and the essence of God must be demonstrated. It is clear therefore that Heidegger regards Aquinas's position as inextricably determined in consequence of metaphysics, and therefore, ontotheology.

What exactly is the character of this belonging? Already I have indicated how Heidegger articulates a number of the Scholastic determinations of *esse*, 'being' and *ens*, 'a being' and *ens commune*, 'being overall'. There is, however, a further determination requiring explication, *esse commune*. In the passage I have cited from the *Zürcher Seminar* there is a hint that Heidegger is well aware that Aquinas wished to avoid the later Scotist position of subsuming God as *summum ens* under the logical category of *ens commune*, when he says, "I believe that being can never be thought as the ground and essence of God."[31] There is here a deliberate play on the words "believe" and "think." Heidegger begins by saying that faith (*der Glaube*) and the thinking of Being (*das Denken des Seins*) have no need of each other.[32] The next sentences begin "I think . . ." and "I believe . . .". In what follows it becomes clear that *thinking* points us away from determining the essence of God, *believing* points us towards that place where God appears within the dimension of being ("insofar as he meets with humanity"). Each mode of human

[29] "Ich habe einen mir wohlgesinnten Jesuiten gebeten, mir die Stellen bei Thomas von Aquin zu zeigen, wo gesagt sei, was 'esse' eigentlich bedeute und der Satz besage: Deus est suum esse. Ich habe bis heute noch keine Antwort" (Heidegger, *Seminare*, 436).

[30] "Est igitur Deus suum esse, et non solum sua essentia."

[31] "Ich glaube, daß das Sein niemals als Grund und Wesen von Gott gedacht werden kann" (Heidegger, *Seminare*, 436).

[32] What happens when faith is explained solely in terms of metaphysics, and is therefore determined by and out of the unfolding of the history of being, is explained in some depth by Heidegger in his *Die Metaphysik als Geschichte des Seins*, published in *Nietzsche*, 2:399-458.

being (*Dasein*) determines us differently with regard to God. Thinking, then, points us in one direction with regard to God: thinking yields its own history as a coming to itself in both appropriating and pointing towards the overcoming of metaphysics. Believing points us towards the *experience* of God's revelation: to God as *a* being in the realm of being "insofar as he meets with humanity." Thinking cannot determine in advance (which means from out of the content and structure of thinking itself and what is given to thinking to think *of*) the God who will be met, who might appear "insofar as he does" in the realm of being. Each mode of being (thinking, believing) is held together by this *Dasein*, Heidegger. This holding together cannot be *nötig*—a necessity, literally, "needy" or "wanting." So the separation of faith and thinking opens up a critique of the necessity of explaining God metaphysically. Thinking opens up a space in which theology as reflection on faith can clarify and correct its reflection. Above all, this space is not "founding," which means it does not determine the outcome of *what* is to be thought, only a *how* as a reflection on experience, on a content given from elsewhere than thought itself.[33]

The hint then is that, for Heidegger, Aquinas was aware of the problem of subsuming God under the category of *ens commune* whilst still wishing to think of God as *summum ens*, and this problem is as much a problem for faith as it is for metaphysics.

We have here, however, only a hint. What happens in the carrying through of this medieval problem is made explicit in the 1931 lecture course on division Θ of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Here Heidegger makes explicit the problem in its formulation, and shows both how Aquinas avoids the problem and how this avoidance results in an impasse and an indeterminacy.

[33] Heidegger adopts this position as early as 1928 in the lecture *Phänomenologie und Theologie* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1928; English translation by James Hart and John Maraldo, "Phenomenology and Theology," in *The Piety of Thinking* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976]), where he envisages "ontology" as acting as a "corrective" to the ontic sciences, amongst which must be included Theology. Cf. p. 30 (trans., p. 19): "*Die Ontologie fungiert demnach nur als ein Korrektiv des ontischen, und zwar vorchristlichen Gehaltes der theologischen Grundbegriffe.* Hier bleibt aber zu beachten: diese Korrektion ist nicht begründend"; "Here one must note this correction is not grounding" (my translation).

In the Middle Ages, the *analogia entis* which nowadays has sunk again to the level of a catchword played a rôle, not as a question of being but as a welcomed means of formulating a religious conviction in philosophical terms. The God of Christian belief, although the creator and preserver of the world, is altogether different and separate from it; but he is being [*Seiende*] in the highest sense, the *summum ens;* creatures infinitely different from him are nevertheless also being [*seiend*], *ens finitum*. How can *ens infinitum* and *ens finitum* both be named *ens*, both be thought in the same concept, "being"? Does the *ens* hold good only *æquivoce* or *univoce*, or even *analogice?* They rescued themselves from this dilemma with the help of analogy, which is not a solution but a formula.[34]

There are two things to note. First, here in 1931 Heidegger was carrying out a distinction between the *Seinsfrage* and the God of Christian faith in exactly the same way as in the *Zürcher Seminar* in 1951. Second, the appeal to analogy in some sense safeguards faith as such in that the appeal to analogy is not truly a statement of metaphysics, it is merely "playing a rôle." It both represents and, as this representation, also forestalls determining the God of faith metaphysically, in which a purely univocal understanding of being, *ens commune* (*das Seiende "allgemeine," überhaupt*) subsumes and determines God.

How (for Heidegger at least) might Aquinas have achieved this? In other words, how does analogy stand with *esse?* By an appeal not to *ens* but to *esse commune*. To the *Summa* question "whether any created thing might be like God," Aquinas replies that there are numerous ways that one thing can be like another, and lists them. Similitude to God, however, is of a different order from similitude between things, and is similitude specifically and

[34] "Im Mittelalter hat die analogia entis—die heute wieder als Schlagwort verkauft wird—eine Rolle gespielt, aber nicht als Seinsfrage, sondern als ein willkommenes Mittel dazu, eine Glaubensüberzeugung mit philosophischen Ausdrücken zu formulieren. Der Gott des christlichen Glaubens, obzwar Schöpfer und Erhalter der Welt, ist schlechthin von dieser verschieden und getrennt; er ist aber das im höchsten Sinne Seiende, das summum ens; seiend sind aber auch die von ihm unendlich verschiedenen Geschöpfe, das ens finitum. Wie kann ens infinitum und ens finitum beides ens genannt, beides im selben Begriff 'Sein' begriffen werden? Gilt das ens nur æquivoce oder univoce, oder eben analogice? Man hat sich aus der Schwierigkeit gerettet mit Hilfe der Analogie, die keine Lösung ist, sondern eine Formel" (Martin Heidegger, *Aristoteles: Metaphysik Θ 1-3*, Gesamtausgabe Band 33 [Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1981], 46; English translation by Walter Brogan and Peter Warnek, *Aristotle's Metaphysics Θ 1-3* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995]).

only in virtue of a thing's being. This kind of similitude is "only according to some sort of analogy, as existence is common to all [*sicut ipsum esse est commune omnibus*]. In this way all created beings are like God as the first and universal principle of all being."[35] In this sense beings are in virtue of being-caused, and not beings but being-caused is in virtue of the being of God. *Esse commune* is therefore, when understood in relation to God, understood as *esse analogice*. In relation to things it is not their logical unity (*ens commune*) but their common being-caused. In his *Commentary on the Divine Names* (of Dionysius) Aquinas makes a number of distinctions concerning *esse commune*. First, *esse commune* is not a merely mental or logical construct; it really inheres in things.[36] Second, created beings depend on *esse commune*, but not God. *Esse commune* depends on God. In this sense we understood that beings are not grounded in God, but beings are grounded in being-caused, which is in consequence of God, thereby protecting God from dependency on beings, and separating beings from a formal or univocal dependence on God. Rudi te Velde notes that

> *esse commune* coincides with created being. The '*commune*' is added in order to distinguish the being that all beings have in common from the divine being that is self-subsistent and therefore radically distinct from all other things. The reason for making this distinction is to exclude the pantheistic error which might arise from the thesis that God is "being" without any addition.[37]

[35] "sed secundum aliqualem analogiam, sicut ipsum esse est commune omnibus. Et hoc modo illa quæ sunt a Deo, assimilantur ei inquantum sunt entia, ut primo et principio totius esse" (Aquinas, *STh* I, q. 4, a. 3).

[36] John Caputo, in treating this subject, appears to confuse the logical concept of *ens commune* with *esse commune* (*Heidegger and Aquinas* [New York: Fordham, 1982]; see esp. p. 141, "*Esse commune* is a universal constructed by the mind in the light of actual beings"). Fran O'Rourke shows decisively from a multiplicity of Aquinas's texts that this is not the case: "it exists primarily within the multiplicity, not as an abstract unity but as a concrete perfection realised differently in the individual members of the many . . . *esse inhærens*" (*Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas* [Leiden: E J Brill, 1992], 144f.).

[37] Rudi te Velde, *Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: E J Brill, 1995), 188f. Te Velde supplies an extended discussion of the problematic term "*esse commune*" in chapter 10 of this book.

Third, although things participate in *esse commune*, God does not participate in *esse commune* but rather the reverse, *esse commune* is that way in which created things participate in God. Fran O'Rourke's extensive investigation into *esse commune* and its dependence as a formulation on Dionysius concludes "It would appear evident that . . . *ipsum esse commune* is identical with St. Thomas' notion of *actus essendi*, the intimate act of existing which is at the heart of every reality."[38]

Earlier in the *Aristotle* lectures Heidegger had argued that analogy as a "formula" is also a "stringent aporia," which is no answer to the *Seinsfrage* but actually the mark of its not being asked at all, and that it represents an "impasse in which ancient philosophy, and along with it all subsequent philosophy right up to today, is enmeshed."[39] In this sense it is both a figure for metaphysics as a history, and a figure of Christianity's lack of need of metaphysics for faith.

Is this the same as saying that with the notion of analogy Aquinas frees God from being, *esse*? To some extent at least, this question asks about the extent to which Aquinas's and Aristotle's understandings of analogy are the same. Heidegger pointed out elsewhere that the enquiry into causes is an enquiry primarily guided not by metaphysics but by faith, because faith dictates that God as *causa prima* is also creator of the world.[40] He concludes, "Thus *prima philosophia* is knowledge of the highest cause, of God as the creator—a train of thought which was completely alien to Aristotle in this form."[41]

[38] O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas*, 143f. His whole discussion may be found in chapter 6, "Dionysian Elements in Aquinas' Notion of Being."

[39] "(die) Ausweglosigkeit, in der das antike Philosophieren und damit alles nachfolgende bis heute eingemauert ist" (Heidegger, *Aristoteles*, 46).

[40] "Im höchsten Sinne ist etwas erkannt, wenn ich auf die *letzte Ursache* zurückgehe, auf die causa prima. Diese aber ist, wie durch den Glauben gesagt wird, Gott als Schöpfer der Welt" (Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt, Endlichkeit Einsamkeit*, Gesamtausgabe Band 29/30 [Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1983], 71f.).

[41] "Also ist die prima philosophia Erkenntnis der höchsten Ursache, Gottes als des Schöpfers—ein Gedankengang, der *Aristoteles* in dieser Form vollkommen fernlag" (ibid.).

B) Beyond Being

Jean-Luc Marion has continued to ask "does speculative Christian theology as understood in its exemplars—and in this context I am of course thinking primarily of St. Thomas Aquinas—belong to metaphysics in the strict sense, or has it been a response to the specific conceptual demands of the Revelation which gave rise to it?"[42] With the publication of his *Dieu sans l'être* he made his now renowned attack on St. Thomas, suggesting that Aquinas's denomination of God as *ipsum esse* is determined out of God as *ens* and so determined "*before* the doctrine of divine names, hence of analogy."[43] He concluded, "can one not hazard that, according to what Saint Thomas himself freely insinuates, the *ens*, related to 'God' as his first name, indeed could determine him as the ultimate—idol?"[44] This troublesome statement led him in the *Preface* to the English edition, *God without Being*, to say (without much explanation), "even when he thinks God as *esse*, Saint Thomas nevertheless does not chain God either to Being or to metaphysics."[45] This is less of a retraction than it seems. No medieval metaphysician worth his salt would have chained God to being or metaphysics, which is not at all to say that he would not earnestly have sought to chain the being of things (and so metaphysics) to God. If *esse commune* is precisely that which in St. Thomas protects God from being chained to the finitude of creatures, it is also the figure of how creatures are formally dependent on God. In January 1995

[42] "La théologie spéculative chrétienne, entendue dans ses figures exemplaires (et en ce lieu je songe évidemment d'abord saint Thomas d'Aquin) appartient-elle à la métaphysique prise au sens strict, ou a-t-elle répondu aux exigences conceptuelles propres de la Révélation qui l'a provoquée?" (Jean-Luc Marion, "Métaphysique et Phénoménologie: Une relève pour la Théologie," *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique* 94, no. 3 [1993]: 21f.).

[43] "l'appréhension thomiste de DiXeu comme *ipsum esse*, donc sa dénomination à partir de l'*ens* intervient, dans l'ordre des raisons, *avant* que ne se constitue la doctrine des noms divins, donc de l'analogie" (Marion, *Dieu sans l'être*, 120).

[44] "ne peut-on pas risquer que, selon ce que saint Thomas lui-même se laisse aller à insinuer, l'*ens* pourrait bien, rapporté à 'Dieu' comme son premier nom, en fixer l'ultime—idole?" (ibid., 122).

[45] Marion, *God without Being*, xxii.

Marion retracted his attack on St. Thomas altogether.[46] Has Marion arrived in his retraction at the same place from where Heidegger began? How did he achieve this retraction?

Whereas Marion can say "if the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas could assimilate itself to *an* onto-theo-logy . . .",[47] Heidegger could not. For Heidegger there are not onto-theo-logies, only onto-theo-logy as that figure of the concealment of being which, while on the one hand it determines God in a particular direction, is yet on the other also the name for the impasse of metaphysics and the name of the history of being itself, when understood as metaphysics. For Heidegger the question concerning Aquinas is solely how what he says stands in relation to onto-theo-logy. What is revealed here is a fundamentally different perspective from Marion's. Heidegger is concerned to illustrate how the God of faith becomes subordinated to metaphysics, whilst admitting that the subordination has not been decisive for faith, at least in the case of Aquinas. Marion, however, is concerned to free God from a metaphysics that he has already accepted as decisive. Having so decisively freed Aquinas from metaphysics, he is unable to show how he genuinely relates to it, and so whether and how Aquinas's understanding belongs to the history of being. This places Marion in an unfortunate position as one who still wishes to appeal to the history of being as a critique of Nihilism. For, like so many "post-modern" theologians, he is thereby incapacitated from showing how the God of revelation and the world to whom God is revealed belong together.

Based on his reading of Aquinas, Marion argues that the concept of analogy evades the force of *esse commune* and in fact works in the opposite direction to it. He concludes, "Analogy is scarcely the tangential univocity of *esse commune*, but on the contrary opens the space where all univocity of being is

[46] "Thomas d'Aquin récuse donc absolument le premier critère d'une onto-théo-logie en général: l'inscription de 'Dieu' dans la champ métaphysique unifié par l'étant, voire par un même concept d'étant" (Jean-Luc Marion, "Saint Thomas d'Aquin et l'onto-théo-logie," *Revue Thomiste* 95, no. 1 [Janvier-Mars 1995]: 45).

[47] "Si la doctrine de Thomas d'Aquin pouvait s'assimiler à *une* onto-théologie . . ." (ibid., 33; emphasis added).

exploded."[48] Despite earlier in his article having explained the Thomist revision of Dionysius's conception, he simply fails to show how *esse commune* and analogy work together precisely to provide the impasse that might free Aquinas's faith from his conceptuality.

Marion's stress on the separation of *esse commune* and *esse divinum* in Aquinas means that he is driven towards an assertion that *esse divinum* is construed in an exclusively negative sense; this leads him to conclude his retraction by an appeal solely to God as "luminous darkness." Marion's critics have remained skeptical as to the extent to which he has really understood Aquinas. Brian Shanley makes the pertinent point "Marion's reading simply cannot be reconciled with Aquinas's position that certain terms can be predicated of God positively and substantially (though non-quidditatively) through analogy."[49] The question is not decided in the separation of *esse divinum* and *esse commune*. In their being brought together *analogice* nothing is decided *for metaphysics*.

How then should Heidegger's reading of Aquinas be understood? For Heidegger Aquinas's God is determined out of the historical unfolding of metaphysics but is not finally determined by metaphysics. If Heidegger demands to be shown what *esse* actually means in Aquinas, he is being ironical, because for Heidegger *esse commune* and *esse analogice* (what he refers to as *analogia entis*)[50] are already indeterminate at the point where Aquinas receives them and applies them as a solution to the problem of univocity in medieval metaphysics. The indeterminacy is not in the counterposition of God as *ipsum esse subsistens* and *ens infinitum* with *ens finitum* but in the fact that the analogical relationship of beings and God is already indeterminable. *Esse* is

[48] "L'analogie ne gère pas l'univocité tangentielle de l'*esse commune*, mais ouvre au contraire l'espace où toute univocité d'être doit exploser" (ibid., 44).

[49] Brian J. Shanley, O.P., "St. Thomas Aquinas, Onto-Theology and Marion," *The Thomist* 60 (1996): 623.

[50] This phrase has the feeling of having always been a description of Aquinas's position. In fact Hans Urs von Balthasar attributes it exclusively to the twentieth-century German theologian Erich Pryzwara in 1932 and suggests that it has no prior history to him; see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Karl Barth: Darstellung und Deutung seiner Theologie* (Köln: Hegner Verlag, 1951), chap. 4.

indeterminate in advance of Aquinas, and Aquinas relies on this indeterminacy for the sake of faith. The irony is still more emphasized as a demand made of a Jesuit to explicate a Dominican's thinking, as this understanding of Aquinas is (ironically at least) achieved through the incontrovertibly metaphysical position of the Jesuit Suarez.[51]

Of greater interest should be the question of why Aquinas appeals to the metaphysical conception of being, *esse*, in the first place. What understanding of being led the medievals to want to chain being to God? It is not possible to do anything more than sketch an answer here, an answer that has entirely to do with the intellection (*intelligere*, νοεῖν) of being. This is somewhat clearer if the dispute between Caputo and O'Rourke is recalled concerning the meaning of *esse commune*. While Caputo argues that it is purely an intellection, O'Rourke demonstrates that while it can be an intellection, it also must and does refer to the reality of beings; it is an "*esse inhaerens*." For Dionysius, the relation between knowing and God is clearly explicated in chapter 7 of *De Divinis Nominibus*. The question is how we approach God. Dionysius stresses that we do not know God in his nature (φύσεως). He is not one of the things that are, he cannot be understood, words cannot contain him, and no name can lay hold of him. In this sense he "is" beyond being. Dionysius adds, "the most divine knowledge of God, that which comes through unknowing, is achieved in a union far beyond mind, when the mind turns away from all things, even from itself."[52] I do not want to underestimate the force of Dionysius's notion of "beyond being" (ὑπὲρ πάντα τὰ ὄντα, ὑπερουσίας). O'Rourke interprets Dionysius's use of the term "non-being" (οὐκ ὄντων) in a way guided by Maximus, "The interpretation of non-being as referring

[51] I might be accused of simply reading too much into the text. That this is not so, however, is indicated by Heidegger's own comparison of Aquinas and Suarez in the 1929 lecture course published as volume 29/30 of the *Gesamtausgabe*. In §14 he says, "Thomas and medieval philosophy . . . are important only to a lesser extent for the development of modern metaphysics . . . direct influence . . . was exercised by one theologian and philosopher . . . the Spanish Jesuit Franz Suarez."

[52] "Καὶ ἔστιν αὖθις ἡ Θειοτάτη τοῦ Θεοῦ γνῶσις, ἡ δι' ἀγνωσίας γινωσκομένη κατὰ τὴν ὑπερ νοῦν ἕωσιν, ὅτά ὁ νοῦς, τῶν ὄντων πάντων ἀποστάς, ἔπειτα καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἀφεις" (Dionysius, *De Divinis Nominibus*, 7 [*PG* 3:872]).

to God and to formless matter is generally espoused by Dionysius's commentators and would appear to be correct."[53] This is confusing. When applied to God, non-being can be a figure for beyond-being, but not in the sense of non-being as formless matter. This is confirmed in the *Mystica Theologia* when Dionysius says, "[God as Cause] falls neither within the predicate of non-being nor of being."[54] God is as unknowable because he does not exist, he exceeds existence.

Aquinas concurs with this insofar as what is at issue is finite knowledge of God. He considers the objection that God is non-existent and beyond existence, "as Dionysius says." It follows from this that God exists as "above all that exists" and is in this sense alone non-existent. Hence it follows not that he cannot be known, but that he exceeds every kind of knowledge.[55] Still more importantly, to know and to be are the same, "everything is knowable according as it is actual."[56] God is comprehensible absolutely, but only to any finite being in proportion to its capacity to know. God, therefore, as infinite alone knows himself. God is omniscient. The assertion that God is *ipsum esse* is in part a defense of his (metaphysical) attributes as *summum ens* and *causa omnium*. Dionysius, in contrast, seeks only to show that God is the cause of all that is, and has no concept of God as highest being. In this sense, Dionysius's position is less overtly in consequence of metaphysics than is Aquinas's.

O'Rourke notes, "whereas for Dionysius it is a hindrance to our discovery of God that human knowledge is oriented towards finite beings, this for Aquinas is the very foundation of our natural disclosure of God. Through the notion of being, and via its analogous value, our certitude of his existence is existentially

[53] O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas*, 82.

[54] "οὐδέ το τῶν οὐκ ὄντων, οὐδέ τι τῶν ὄντων ἐστὶν" (Dionysius, *Mystica Theologia* [*PG* 3:1040]).

[55] "(3) Sed Deus non existens, sed supra existentia, ut Dionysius dicit. Ergo non est intelligibilis, sed est supra omnem intellectum. . . . ad tertium dicendum quod Deus non sic dicitur non existens, quasi nullo modo sit existens: sed quia est supra omne existens, inquantum est suum esse" (Aquinas, *STh* I, q. 12, a. 1).

[56] "cum unumquodque sit cognoscibile secundum quod est in actu" (ibid.).

grounded."[57] Aquinas, unlike Dionysius, makes no appeal to "un-knowing" as that which leads to what is un-being.

What is Heidegger's understanding of the grounding of finite predications infinitely in and of God? His consideration of Aristotle's discussion of δύναμις in the *Metaphysics* reveals an "inner essential togetherness of withdrawal and notness to the essence of force." This he names as "finitude" (*Endlichkeit*).[58] He adds:

> Where there is force and power, there is finitude. Hence God is not powerful and "all-powerfulness" (omnipotence) is, properly thought, a concept that dissolves like all its companions into thin air and the unthinkable. Or otherwise, if God is powerful, he is finite and in any case something other than that which is thought in the common representation of God who can do anything and so is belittled to an omnipresence.[59]

Here we have the answer to the question of whether God and being can ever be the same or thought in any kind of equation for Heidegger. Being itself is finite. To think God in terms of being is to impose limit and finitude on God. Heidegger had said earlier in the same lecture course that "Meister Eckhart . . . says God 'is' not at all because 'being' is a finite predicate and absolutely cannot be said of God."[60]

In this consideration of Heidegger's critique of theology as "theiology" it remains only to consider the question of "cause." Again, I am limited solely to a sketch. Thought metaphysically, God is variously the "cause" or "ground" of beings. Heidegger

[57] O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas*, 56.

[58] "die innere Wesenszugehörigkeit des Entzugs und der Nichtigkeit zum Wesen der Kraft" (Heidegger, *Aristoteles*, 158).

[59] "Wo Kraft und Macht, da Endlichkeit. Daher ist Gott nicht mächtig und 'Allmacht' ist, recht gedacht, ein Begriff, der wie alle seine Genossen sich in Dunst auflöst und nicht zu denken ist. Oder aber, wenn der Gott mächtig ist, dann ist er endlich und jedenfalls etwas anderes als das, was die gemeine Vorstellung von Gott denkt, der alles kann und so zu einem Allerweltswesen herabgewürdigt wird" (ibid.).

[60] "Gott 'ist' überhaupt nicht, weil 'Sein' ein endliches Prädikat ist und von Gott gar nicht gesagt werden kann" (ibid., 46). Heidegger notes that this is the thinking of the early Eckhart, and we might add possibly the Eckhart of the *Quæstiones Parisiensis*. It is difficult to see how it could be the Eckhart of the *Prologi* to the *Opus Tripartitum* with its opening to each division "*Esse est Deus* . . ." (in *Opera Latina* 2, ed. Hildebrand Bascour [Rome: Sancta Sabina, 1935], 12.)

describes as the metaphysical figure of God as first cause the Spinozan and Suarezian phrase *causa sui*.[61] In *Zur Sache des Denkens* he understands this phrase as "that theological moment of metaphysics, which consists in the fact that the *summum ens* as *causa sui* accomplishes the grounding of all beings as such."[62] Elsewhere he describes the *causa sui* as the metaphysical representation of the being of beings—in other words being (*das Sein*) as such is concealed in favor of the beingness (*Seiendheit*) of beings (*die Seienden*) conceded solely as God.[63] For Heidegger, being (*das Sein*) can never ground individual beings (*das Seiende*). Indeed, the being of beings—the "ontological difference"—is understood variously as an *Ab-grund* and the inner finitude of beings. Being itself is, in its belonging together with the nothing, *das Nichts*, finite and finitude. The question concerning being, however, opens up that being whose being it is to be *as* the place where the ontological difference takes place: *Dasein*, the human being.

It is the crudest error to conceive the ontological difference in Aquinas as the difference between God (as some kind of "infinite" being-in-general) and finite beings—contra the strictly *metaphysical* positions of Descartes, Leibniz, etc., where the ontological difference is posited in exactly this way. As I have already indicated, it is precisely to prevent this error that Aquinas employs the term "*esse commune*." The ontological difference in Aquinas must be understood as that difference represented by the distinction between *esse commune*, being in general, and any given *ens*, or individual being. Does Aquinas thereby escape metaphysics? No, because *esse commune* as far as the being of

[61] Cf. also Descartes, *Meditationes*, 49. In *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969), p. 36, Heidegger actually attributes the phrase *causa sui* to the 24 *Metaphysical Theses* of Leibniz which he lists at the end of the piece *Die Metaphysik als Geschichte des Seins*, in *Nietzsche* 2:454 (English translation by Joan Stambaugh, *Metaphysics as History of Being*, in *The End of Philosophy* [San Francisco: Harper, 1973], 49ff.).

[62] "Das theologische Moment der Metaphysik gemeint, dies also, daß das summum ens als causa sui die Begründung alles Seienden als solchen leistet" (Heidegger, *Zur Sache das Denkens*, 36).

[63] Martin Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske Verlag, 1957), 51; English translation by Joan Stambaugh, *Identity and Difference* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1969; republished, 1974).

individual finite beings is concerned operates rather as "beingness" (*Seiendheit*) and so is enmeshed in the language of (medieval) metaphysics, but because *esse commune*, as far as the being of God is concerned is as *esse analogice*, this language simply plays the rôle of enshrining in philosophical terms the pious assertion "in the beginning God created heaven and earth." This interpretation of Aquinas is somewhat buttressed by his own refusal to name God as *causa sui*. In his first published work, *De ente et essentia*, Aquinas says if a "thing would be its own cause (then) it would bring itself into being, which is impossible."[64] In this sense then the question of God as first cause is also held in the same indeterminacy of *esse analogice* that we saw earlier, which makes *esse commune* the formal ground (cause) of beings.

If the equation of God and being is a crudity in Aquinas, from whence does it arise? In fact we can trace its origins to nominalism and questions concerning human freedom.[65] It was William of Ockham's rejection of the Scholastic reconciliation of theology and philosophy that laid the basis for an understanding of the divine that leads, in fact, to Nihilism. For Ockham, God is the only necessary being, and so there is (considered in one way) a fundamental difference between the being of God and the being of created things: creation in this sense is contingent, which means that every creature or created thing is radically dependent for its existence on the will of God. The difference, however, is not explained by an impasse, *analogice*, but by appeal to priority and degree. This in turn means that no creature is in any sense dependent on or explained by creation in general, but is only explicable in consequence of the Divine will. Michael Gillespie concludes, "for Ockham, the idea of divine omnipotence thus means that human beings can never be certain that any of the impressions they have correspond to an actual object."[66]

[64] Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, 4, §7. "quia . . . aliqua res esset sui ipsius causa et aliqua res se ipsam in esse produceret: quod est impossibile." Cf. also Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* I, c. 22, §6.

[65] Cf. Michael Gillespie, *Nihilism before Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[66] Ibid., 18.

Ockham's position is in fact the radical assertion of interiority.[67] Gillespie notes that "Ockham even cites Augustine's claim that the greatest certainty is the certainty that 'I know that I am living.'"[68] Put like this, Descartes's *cogito ergo sum* is but a short step away—indeed (and Gillespie would not be the first to hint towards it) the question remains whether Augustine or Ockham and not only Descartes is the founder of modern subjectivity.

In fact caution needs to be exercised, not least because it is not at all self-evident that "living" is the same as "thinking" in the sense that it would have at all been intelligible for Augustine that I might "live" apart from creation. The radical departure signified by Ockham and brought to fruition by Descartes is that "to live" is possible apart from world or creation such that world or creation then becomes an object (or a domain of objects) which has to be explained subsequent to my discovery that I live, rather than being the conditioning possibility for any explanation at all. More important still, my "to live" is the only thing I might explain apart from God (assuming my radical dependence on his will), which means that even in the face of an omnipotent God, my "I live" (I think) is the only thing of which I might be certain *irrespective* of the omnipotence of God. The most radical aspect of Ockham's formulation is that in its denial of the meaning of creation, God comes to be understood as *a* being apart from any human being, and most particularly apart from me. Ockham prepares the way for God to become an "object" of theological investigation. The very separation of the human from the divine in this way (with its concomitant devaluation of creation) actually has the effect of bringing Creator and creature under the same determination, that of "being."

[67] If we understand "radical dependence" as "valuation," then it becomes clear how remarkably Ockham's God prefigures the Nietzschean Subject as *that one* who, in the revaluation of all values, gives value to things and so makes them what they are. This is not so extravagant a claim if one recalls Gillespie's suggestion that for Ockham we are no more than ideas in the mind of God. If such a God is declared dead, then we are the ones who undertake the valuation.

[68] Gillespie, *Nihilism before Nietzsche*, 19.

This is exactly the position arrived at by Duns Scotus in *De Metaphysica*.[69] Scotus says (§3), "for God is not known to us naturally unless being is univocal to the created and uncreated." This leads him to conclude (§4) that "thus it follows that if some being is finite, then some being is infinite." Finally (§5), we learn that "being is the subject and God is the end of Metaphysics." This demonstrates conclusively that the position often erroneously ascribed to Aquinas is in fact held by Duns Scotus—that God is known by way of an enquiry into being (*ens*), and therefore that God as univocal *primum ens* is the same as being (which for St. Thomas the whole doctrine of analogy was set up to avoid), and therefore that God is understood as *summum ens*, and *ens finis*. It also shows that for Scotus God is not subsumed under being where being is a separate (and so higher) category from God, but that God as highest (infinite) being subsumes all created things as univocally dependent on God. Whereas it can be argued that Dionysius and Aquinas used the language of metaphysics to work out an understanding of God, with Scotus and Ockham the question of the nature of God comes to be worked out solely as a metaphysics.

Aquinas continues to maintain that nothing can be said (known) concerning the essence of God in itself—God (and God's essence) is known only through God's effects (i.e., in creation). This means that insofar as Aquinas is enquiring into God through an enquiry into being, *esse*, being is still understood as creation, or created being. It is certainly debatable that Suarez's and Cajetan's reading of Aquinas rendered "Thomism" as a metaphysics.

In consequence of nominalism, therefore, being then ceases to mean being-created, which means it ceases in any sense to explain creation except as a formal, logical, dependence.[70] The bringing

[69] See Allan Wolter, trans., *Duns Scotus: Philosophical Writings* (Hackett, Cambridge, 1987), 1-13.

[70] This is, I grant, a slight simplification. Dionysius resolved this question in the *Divine Names* and *Mystical Theology* by speaking of God as ὑπερουσίας (beyond being) in order to avoid bringing God under the determination of (created) being. Dionysius does, however, continue to say that in some sense God "is" and to speak of God as being "beyond being." This distinction is maintained by Aquinas in his separation of the common being-caused (*esse commune*) of all things from the being of God (*ipsum esse subsistens*). It is in this sense that David Burrell and others have argued that Aquinas's understanding of *ens increatum* is not in any sense that of "a" being.

about of God as *a* being means the bringing about of one who can also be declared to be dead, and it means simultaneously the bringing about of an object who lies beyond, outside, or is other than the Subject who knows this.[71] The Subject is, therefore, atheistic, by definition and in its very working out, where "atheistic" means "without" as in "without the walls," or "outside." In this sense, Heidegger's separation of God and being can be understood to be both a critique of nominalism and, to some degree at the least, in accordance with St. Thomas.

II. NIETZSCHE'S WORD "GOD IS DEAD"

I have shown that what Heidegger normally calls variously "theology," "systematic theology," "dogmatics," "Church doctrine," or "Christian philosophy" he means to be understood as determined by nothing other than metaphysics, the *-theo-* of onto-theo-logy. The sustained anti-Christian polemic is nothing other than a shorthand for his own proclaiming of the end of metaphysics, the end of God as *Deus positivus*, that being whose being it is necessarily to be because he is that which is most beingful about any particular being, *causa sui*, "ground" or the "beingness" (*Seiendheit*). And all of this "philosophical research" is in consequence of Nietzsche's madman's frolicking proclamation.

The separation of the thought of God from the *Seinsfrage*, a separation that comes about in the making-questionable of metaphysics that is also its overcoming, makes possible the ontic science of faith, which for Heidegger is that understanding of

[71] This reads Gillespie's argument against himself. His contending thesis is that Nietzsche misunderstood the origins of Nihilism, a misunderstanding which resulted in his declaration "God is dead." While I accept many of Gillespie's arguments and conclusions, I remain unconvinced that Nietzsche's insight differs so greatly from the origins he traces and so fails to describe the essence of Nihilism in its unfolding. Indeed, Nietzsche's brilliance is that he presents not simply an historical insight, but the essence of what can also be explained as a history in a figure—of a madman, or of Zarathustra.

theology which is opposed to "theiology."[72] This is less shocking than it sounds. That God might not exist, but possess essence, is an open question for at least some medieval theologians—a question open enough for Aquinas to believe he has to prove with his "therefore," *igitur*, that God is his own existence and not merely his own essence.

Are we closer to understanding the atheism of philosophical research? Could it be that Heidegger's God, of whose essence he might be moved to speak, does not exist? Might it be that in the phrase "God does not exist" the contested meaning for Heidegger is not the word "God" but the word "exist" so that what "God" names is secure in itself and only contestable when *brought into* the realm "existence"? Heidegger actually says as much in 1949, in the "Einleitung" to the lecture *Was ist Metaphysik?*: "Human beings alone exist. Rocks are, but they do not exist. Trees are, but they do not exist. Horses are, but they do not exist. Angels are, but they do not exist. God is, but does not exist."[73] Might it not just be that Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God leaves open the question—or re-opens the question and clears a space for consideration—of God's essence? Heidegger goes still further. His difficult but important work *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, dating from 1936-38, has as its seventh division a section entitled "*Der Letzte Gott*," "the last God." This section opens with a chapter called simply "*das Letzte*," "the last."[74] Here we are told that

[72] It is important to understand what is being said here. In *Phänomenologie und Theologie* Heidegger argues that the *object* of theology as a positive science is not God as such, but rather "theology is the relationship of God in general to humanity [*der Mensch*] in general and vice versa" (see p. 25). Such a theology is only possible in consequence of the question of being. Faith is defined as "rebirth." Heidegger adds that the Christian experience of rebirth is that the pre-Christian existence is overcome in faith, which means it is ontologically included within faith-full existence. He concludes: "All theological concepts necessarily include that understanding of being which is constitutive of human existence [*Dasein*], insofar as it exists at all" (see p. 29) In other words, philosophy is that enquiry into human existence into which theology as the science of revelation and faith later enters and "sublates" (*aufgehoben*), which means "raises up, keeps, and preserves in the new creation."

[73] "Der Mensch allein existiert. Der Fels ist, aber er existiert nicht. Der Baum ist, aber er existiert nicht. Das Pferd ist, aber er existiert nicht. Der Engel ist, aber er existiert nicht. Gott ist, aber er existiert nicht" (Heidegger, "Einleitung," in *Wegmarken*, 204).

[74] Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* §253, Gesamtausgabe Band 65 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1989), 405-20.

The last God has its most unique singularity, and stands outside each reckoning determination which the titles "mono-theism," "pan-theism" and "atheism" intend. Monotheism and all kinds of theism come about as that Judaeo-Christian "apologetic" which takes for granted the thinking of metaphysics. With the death of God all theisms collapse.[75]

So for Heidegger, all theisms, including atheisms, are determinations of the same thing: metaphysics. In what way? The key is the word *verrechnenden*, which I have rendered as "reckoning." Throughout his work, Heidegger locates this word firmly within the province of two thinkers in particular. The first is Leibniz, the second, Nietzsche. For Leibniz, *verrechnenden* and other compounds of the verb *rechnen* translate in one way the Latin *ratio*, which in English we normally translate as "reason." To reckon means to think, but to think in a particular way, to total-up, to count, to give account, to do accounting, to undertake that thinking which is *mathesis* as certainty. Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche's use of *rechnen*, *ratio* also bears this meaning, but becomes still more weighty, for reckoning thinking is that thinking which values, e-valuates, produces value, which culminates in the devaluation of the uppermost values and revaluation of all values.[76] Metaphysical thinking is that reckoning thinking which produces all theisms, including atheisms. The Judaeo-Christian apologetic is subsumed within this thinking—*theology* as traditionally conceived is metaphysics. With Nietzsche's madman's proclamation of the death of God (re-echoed throughout *Also sprach Zarathustra*), metaphysical thinking is seen for the first time as that thinking which speaks of God as a being, an existence, that renders and reckons the "thing" God as an object, a reckoning reckoned by a subject; this is the

[75] "Der letzte Gott hat seine einzigste Einzigkeit und steht außerhalb jener verrechnenden Bestimmung, was die Titel 'Mono-theismus,' 'Pan-theismus' und 'A-theismus' meinen. 'Monotheismus' und alle Arten des 'Theismus' gibt es erst seit der jüdisch-christlichen 'Apologetik,' die die 'Metaphysik' zur denkerischen Voraussetzung hat. Mit dem Tod dieses Gottes fallen alle Theismen dahin" (ibid., 411).

[76] Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen des Grundes*, 1929, republished in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1967), 21-72; English translation by T. Malick, *The Essence of Reasons* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1969. Cf. also the lecture course given in 1955/56 as *Der Satz vom Grund;* and idem, "Der europäische Nihilismus," in *Nietzsche* 2:31-256.

God who appears not in the realm of being (alluded to in the *Zürcher Seminar*) but in the subject-object distinction.

Such a God is dead, says Heidegger, and yet after paying due attention to the death of God, he goes on to speak of another God, *der letzte Gott*, who defies all reckoning and determination. Heidegger reminds us that *das Letzte* does not simply mean the (temporal) last, but more importantly the outermost, the most distant, the furthest away, but also the newest, the latest (in the sense of Latin *novissimus*)—a God, perhaps about whom nothing can be said? If Heidegger can say nothing of God—which means here, if he can say *the* Nothing in connection with God, if he can contradict the medieval dictum *ex nihilo nihil fit* ("out of nothing nothing comes"), the "highest reason" of a *Deus positivus*, and bring God into an approximation with nothing so that he can speak of the outermost of God—if he can do this and we can hear it, might we be approaching Heidegger's God?

The question therefore becomes, how did this *dead* God come first to life? Heidegger prints in the opening lecture series of his two volumes on *Nietzsche* a prescript, itself a quotation from Nietzsche's *Der Antichrist:* "Well-nigh two thousand years and not a single new God!"[77] This might almost be the "*Leitwort*," the guiding thought of Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche. In the last of the actual lectures on Nietzsche (not published with the others in 1961), Heidegger calls this phrase "the *one* word that should indicate to us Nietzsche's basic-experience and basic-determination."[78] This word, then, begins and ends the *Nietzsche* lecture courses. It sums them up. It is therefore important to understand what this *word* says. But Heidegger normally says that "Nietzsche's word is '*Gott ist tot*'."[79]

[77] "Zwei Jahrtausende beinahe und nicht ein einziger neuer Gott!" (Heidegger, *Nietzsche* 1:11).

[78] "Das *eine* Wort, das uns Nietzsches Grunderfahrung und Grundstimmung andeuten soll, lautet 'Zwei Jahrtausende . . .'" (Martin Heidegger, *1. Nietzsches Metaphysik; 2. Einleitung in die Philosophie Denken und Dichten,* Gesamtausgabe Band 50 [Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1990], 107).

[79] Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsches Wort "Gott ist Tot,"* in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1952); English translation by W. Lovitt, "The Word of Nietzsche 'God is Dead,'" in *The Question Concerning Technology* (New York: Harper and Row 1977), 53-114: "(Nachweise) Die Hauptteile wurden 1943 in kleineren Kreisen wiederholt

Are there then *two* words of Nietzsche? Heidegger says in the *Nietzsche* lectures, "The word 'God is dead' is not an atheistic doctrinal principle, but the formula for the basic experience of an event of western history."[80] "Event" here translates *das Ereignis,* the word Nietzsche himself uses in the Madman's tale in *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft.* This word is also used to describe Nihilism itself, for Heidegger says

> We can say, in leaning towards the word itself, that Nihilism is an event [*Ereignis*], that means a doctrine, which is a concern with the *nihil,* the Nothing. Considered formally, the Nothing is the negation of something, indeed of every something. *All* "something" constitutes beings as a whole. The positing of the Nothing is the negation of beings as a whole.[81]

So Nihilism is that event (*Ereignis*) which brings before us as a "basic" or "grounding" experience that there is "beings as a whole," the Something in general (God), and it brings us before it in the character of a nihilation, which is its *Ereignis.* Heidegger presents Nihilism as the bringing together of God (understood as "beings as a whole") with the Nothing.

There is a circular movement being carried through here. At its outset, metaphysics conceives God as the "ground" of beings as a whole, as what underpins them as their founding possibility. For Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche, "Nihilism is the event [*Ereignis*] of the dwindling away of the weight out of all weighty things, the fact of the misplacing of the center of

vorgetragen. Der Inhalt beruht auf den Nietzschevorlesungen, die zwischen 1936 und 1940 in fünf Semestern an der Universität Freiburg i. Br. gehalten wurden. Sie stellen sich die Aufgabe, Nietzsches Denken als die Vollendung der abendländischen Metaphysik aus der Geschichte des Seins zu begreifen.—Die Textstellen aus Nietzsches Werken sind nach der Großoktavausgabe angeführt."

[80] "Das Wort 'Gott ist tot' ist kein atheistischer Lehrsatz, sondern die Formel für die Grunderfahrung eines Ereignisses der abendländischen Geschichte" (Heidegger, *Nietzsche* 1:183).

[81] "Nihilismus, so können wir in Anlehnung an das Wort sagen, ist ein Ereignis, bzw. eine Lehre, wo es sich um das nihil, das Nichts handelt. Das Nichts ist—formal genommen—die Verneinung von Etwas, und zwar von jeglichem Etwas. *Alles* Etwas macht das Seiende im Ganzen aus. Die Setzung des Nichts ist die Verneinung des Seienden im Ganzen" (ibid., 1:435f.).

gravity."[82] *Das Ereignis* in Nihilism is the death of God, in which the ground becomes groundless and weightless, it floats off. This has the effect of depriving things of their weight. Nihilism is therefore also the experience of the coming about of "ground" or "basis" as something other than God. What could this be? The "weightiest" of thoughts, and the hardest (*das größte Schwergewicht*)[83] is the eternal recurrence of the same. In relation to "beings as a whole," the eternal recurrence of the same is the securing of all things as the permanentizing of presence, "being" secured in terms of "becoming," "grounding" secured in the (now omnipotent, "powerful") Subject.

"God" as the "ground of all things" (in Leibniz, Descartes, and Plato) is the *inverse* of this, the securing of all things, everything that becomes, in consequence of what most *is*, God. Becoming is secured in terms of being. Here, therefore, is the explanation why for Heidegger, Nietzsche's Nihilism is a movement that is above all a countermovement (*Gegenbewegung*),[84] and "inverted Platonism."

Let us recapitulate. The word of Nietzsche "God is dead" is that *Ereignis* which is the *Ereignis* of Nihilism itself, determined by both the will to power and the eternal return of the same, which comes about as the *Ereignis* of the demand for a devaluation of the uppermost values and the revaluation of all values, and is the negation of every "something," which means the *Ereignis* of the negation of beings as a whole, God. This *Ereignis* brings to light the circular movement which is the completion, the *Vollendung* (fulfillment) of Western metaphysics. Always in these *Ereignisse* there are two contrary movements taking place from the perspective of a (third) place, a site. For at the same time as the will to power, the eternal return of the same, the death of God, and the basic experience and determination of Nihilism come about and are seen for what they are *for the first time* in Nietzsche's philosophy, so also is the possibility of the overturning of Nihilism, and the promise of something new, more

[82] "Der Nihilismus ist das Ereignis des Schwindens aller Gewichte aus allen Dingen, die Tatsache des Fehlens des Schwergewichtes" (ibid., 1:421).

[83] Ibid., 1:323.

[84] Ibid., 1:433f.

original, and deeper than went before. This moment, this yielding of a site which appears to put the 'I' in question—which means that it appears as the very putting of the 'I' into *that* question which is to be asked, the being-question—this alone is *das Ereignis*.

We discover what this means in Heidegger's last Nietzsche lectures of 1944, already mentioned. In section 6, "Godlessness and Worldlessness of Modern Humanity," we learn two things. First, this "word" of Nietzsche says "not only, that, as Nietzsche has often before pronounced, 'God is dead,' but that for two thousand years Europe has been unable to create a new God." Heidegger concludes, "So this is a more essential thought of Nietzsche's, that the gods are created by humanity."[85] He adds a little further, "God and the gods are a 'production' (*Erzeugnis*) of humanity."[86] He concludes that "for Nietzsche not only are God and the gods 'creations' of humanity, but all, whatever is" is so created, "all, what is, is simply an anthropomorphism." Second, then, we learn that "in her and himself Man is '*the* creating.' 'Creativity' is the essence of Man (being human)."[87]

Humanity as the creative produces the "all," whatever "is" of objects. Humanity *as* creating is the itself-out-of-itself-positing subject (*sich-auf-sich-selbst-stellenden Subjektes*) through which all "objects" are determined in their objectivity. We must not overlook the sense of "misplacedness" that this "out-of-itself" conveys. Heidegger tells us:

> In that Man posits [*aufstellen*] his essence out of himself, he stands up as self in wanting. With this rising-up [*Auf-stand*] of humanity in willing as self-wanting all things first and at the same time come to be objects [*Gegenstand*]. Man in his uprising and the world as object belong together. Man stands in rebellion [*Aufstand*] in the world rendered as an object

[85] "Dies Wort sagt nicht nur, daß, wie Nietzsche es zuvor oft ausgesprochen, 'Gott tot ist,' sondern daß Europa seit zwei Jahrtausenden außerstande gewesen, einen neuen Gott zu schaffen. Denn dies ist ein wesentlicher Gedanke Nietzsches, daß die Götter von den Menschen 'geschaffen' werden" (ibid., 2:107).

[86] "Der Gott und die Götter sind ein 'Erzeugnis' des Menschen" (ibid., 2:108).

[87] "Für Nietzsche sind nicht nur der Gott und die Götter 'Erzeugnisse' des Menschen, sondern alles, was ist. . . . Alles, was ist, ist eine einzige Anthropomorphie. In ihr ist der Mensch '*der* Schaffende.' 'Das Schöpferische' ist das Wesen des Menschen" (ibid., 2:109, 110).

[*Gegenstand*]. Rebellious [*aufständische*] man permits the world to be only as an object [*Gegenstand*].[88]

The essence of this activity of modern humanity in its "creativity" is the subject-object distinction.

III. Λόγος AND ἀρχέ: SPEAKING AND BEING

In the anglophone reading and critique of Heidegger especially there has been a lingering suspicion that Heidegger's God is just that pretension to vastness that haunts the phantasmic enormity of the "Being-question." It is for this reason that the third interlocutor of the *Zürcher Seminar* asked the seemingly tantalizing question which might be paraphrased "so is your being really your God?" It is for this reason above all that Heidegger's English translators have loved to translate *Das Sein* with a capital, "Being." Something of this can be found, for instance, in Herbert Dreyfus's suggestion that the way to understand Heidegger's God is in the same manner as Nietzsche's idea of "politics in the grand style"[89] or Stanley Corngold's understanding of Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin that "Heidegger seems to claim that Being itself is present, for Hölderlin 'speaks the sacred.'"[90] For these interpreters and many others, "Being" is just that looming, ectoplastic haunting that might otherwise be figured as the very substance of the stench of the decay of Nietzsche's God. Already I have shown that being can never be this vastness, that the attempt to unfold the ontological difference is a firmly phenomenological account of finitude, and that, freed from the metaphysical shackles of causality, Heidegger's God has a compelling claim to be divine. In this Heidegger might be

[88] "Indem der Mensch sein Wesen auf sich selbst stellt, steht er auf in das Wollen seiner selbst. Mit diesem Auf-stand des Menschen in den Willen als das Wollen seiner selbst werden alle Dinge zugleich und erst zum Gegenstand. Der Mensch im Aufstand und die Welt als Gegenstand gehören zusammen. In der Welt als Gegenstand steht der Mensch im Aufstand. Der aufständische Mensch läßt nur die Welt als Gegenstand zu" (ibid., 2:111).

[89] Herbert Dreyfus, *Mixing Interpretation, Religion and Politics: Heidegger's High Risk Thinking*, The Center for Hermeneutical Studies colloquy 61 (Berkeley: Berkeley Theological Institute, 1992).

[90] Stanley Corngold, *The Fate of the Self* (New York: Columbia, 1986), 199.

understood as pious, indeed with a lively piety more in touch with godliness than any dry love of a *summum ens* might yield. This, surely, is his unspoken claim. In unfolding the history of being while still speaking of God, does not Heidegger publish his piety, which means, does he not share with his readers the God he has experienced?

I have tried in this enquiry to show how Heidegger's God comes about in consequence of Heidegger's understanding of the death of Nietzsche's God in particular, but also Leibniz's and Descartes's and Schelling's God and the death of many other gods. There is a sense in which Heidegger is doing no more than keeping open a question which otherwise metaphysics formally decides.

In the move to the *igitur*, the "therefore," which decided for us that God is his own existence and not merely his own essence, Aquinas notes that saying that God is other than the *primum ens*, the first being, "absurdum est dicere."[91] For Aquinas, however, *primum ens* is that Being who is being other than being-created, *esse commune*, which belongs to *primum ens* by analogy, *esse analogice*. If, in metaphysics, God becomes *a* being, that being upon whom all other beings are (logically, formally) dependent, then that bringing God's essence to language in the working out of the question of God means God is brought to language as *primum ens*, not just any object, *ens*, but *the* object *par excellence*, objectness as such.

In what way did analogy become the name of an impasse that also allows Aquinas to say "Deus est suum esse" without rendering God as *a* being? Heidegger named Aristotelian analogy as a fundamental part of the working out of the understanding of being in metaphysics in *Being and Time* (1927),[92] where he also begins to consider the question of how speaking and being belong together. He returns to the dictum of Parmenides "τὸ γὰρ αὐτο

[91] "Si igitur non sit suum esse, erit ens per participationem, et non per essentiam. Non ergo erit primum ens: quod absurdum est dicere. Est igitur Deus suum esse, et non solum sua essentia" (Aquinas, *STh* I, q. 3, a. 4).

[92] Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (17th ed.; Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1993), §1, in the context of a quotation from the *Summa Theologiae*.

νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι" right up until the end,[93] unfolding the "speaking (knowing) of being" by investigating the meaning of the Greek term λόγος.

Λόγος is understood as a kind of producing in speaking. Heidegger describes Aristotle's dictum from the *Metaphysics* τὸ ὂν λέγεται πολλαχῶς ("being is said in many ways")[94] as a recurrent "formula," but one which names a task, the task of understanding how the many is said according to the one. He proceeds to show how for Aristotle the one (ἕν) and the many (πολλά) belong together. He notes, "*The* ὄν *is so little deprived of unity through the* πολλαχῶς *that, to the contrary, it could absolutely never be what it is without the* ἕν. Indeed, ὄν and ἕν are different conceptually, but in their essence they are the same, that is, they belong together."[95] What is the character of their belonging together? Heidegger comments that the questions relating to this "belonging together" are never either before Aristotle or after him asked, until his own work, *Sein und Zeit*, although they are of concern to Aristotle. The "saying" of the "many" of the "one" results in analogy, in the giving of a primary meaning that hinges and secures all subsequent meanings as a sustaining and guiding meaning.[96] The sustaining and fundamental meaning to which all

[93] "For the same is for knowing (thinking) as is for being." The dictum, which Heidegger names in *Sein und Zeit* as Parmenides' "ontological thesis" (and which he translates and re-translates with a variety of different emphases throughout his work) formed the basis for Heidegger's last seminar in 1973 at Zähringen (Heidegger, *Seminare*, 401ff.). It is worth noting that in *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger connects the working out of Parmenides' dictum explicitly with Aquinas, in which he connects Aquinas's understanding of the soul with the analytic of *Dasein*. This "soul" has nothing to do, he says "with the vicious subjectivizing of the totality of beings." We know from what has been said above, that this "totality of beings" viciously "subjectivized" is nothing other than the metaphysical conception of God. Once again, Heidegger is keen to draw a sharp distinction between Aquinas and the metaphysics of subjectivity (cf. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 14.)

[94] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 6.2 (1026a33).

[95] "*Das* ὄν *geht durch das* πολλαχῶς *sowenig der Einheit verlustig, daß es vielmehr gar nie ohne das* ἕν *sein kann, was es ist*. Zwar sind das ὄν und ἕν dem Begriffe nach verschieden, dem Wesen nach aber dasselbe, d.h. sie gehören zusammen" (Heidegger, *Aristoteles Metaphysik* Θ, p. 29; emphasis in original).

[96] Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 4.1 (1003): οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὸ ὂν λέγεται πολλαχῶς μέν, ἀλλ ἅπαν πρὸς μίαν ἀρχήν. Αρχή is therefore understood as originating guiding principle for the saying of the many.

other meanings are led back is οὐσία.[97] How οὐσία, translated as "substance," can be the sustaining and fundamental meaning remains obscure, an impasse. Heidegger's interpretation of this saying is that to speak of *a* being is to speak of it in the being of its being.

In the course of the lectures Heidegger shows the inner relationship of force (δύναμις) to λόγος, as the determination of λόγος to εἶδος and ποιήσις. To speak of a being brings it to light in a particular way, *as* what it is. This speaking (λόγος) is that speaking-to-oneself that occurs in the laying out and producing of a thing (a being) that selects this way and not that way, hence a deciding-in-producing that includes within itself the other ways of speaking in their concealment (i.e., as the "unsaid" in any given being), because the same being could be "said" in different ways. There is always in speaking a deciding, a selecting. Speaking is therefore in itself a dividedness (*Zwiespältigkeit*) and at the same time a finitude, in the sense of the producing-perceiving of a thing in its "how" as a *this*-thing rather than a *that*-thing and as a finite thing.

Λόγος also belongs to being ensouled (ἔμψυχον), which means it belongs to human being. In other words, speaking of a being in its being implies that there is one who (here) speaks—even if only to her or himself. So λόγος is not only the "how" of making a thing (a being) present, but also the "how" of making a soul present *at the very same time* as the coming about and making present of a thing. Speaking is in this sense "comportment" (*Verhältnis*), the "how" (the mood) of how I and a thing come about, futurally. Heidegger claims this is exactly Aquinas's notion of ensoulment, where the soul is "ens quod natum est convenire cum omne ente."[98] In Heidegger's 1931 investigation of λόγος he simultaneously investigated the term ἀρχή, which we are apt to translate as "origin," in order to show how the horizon of time is also at work in all this "coming about." For Heidegger, Ἀρχή belongs to λόγος not as its origin (what lies behind and so

[97] "Περὶ μὲν οὖν πρώτως ὄντος καὶ προς ὃ πᾶσαι αἱ ἄλλαι κατηγορίαι τοῦ ὄντος ἀναφέρονται εἴρηται, περὶ τῆς οὐσίας" (ibid., 9.1 [1045b25]).

[98] Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 14, quoting Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 1.

"causes") but its end (what I'm trying to get to, what lies ahead of me); it is then a projection, the striving after the thing in its being-produced, the "ὀρεκτὸν" or "projection of what is to be produced there, making known of the outward appearance."[99] How, therefore, did ἀρχή as the projected-towards and so named and known become understood as "origin" and so later as αἰτία, "cause"? It is not possible here to do anything more than sketch Heidegger's argument in the briefest terms. The ἀρχή of λόγος is οὐσία, which comes to be named as substance. But οὐσία thought in this way does not mean "substance" at all, but the here-brought-forward-produced-and-known. It is what occurs in consequence of "speaking" (even as a "speaking to myself"); the "dragged out from what is ahead of me"; not "presence," but "the presencing," as that which is brought into presence, into being. Heidegger does not make this explicit in 1931, but later shows, with respect to Aristotle's understanding of φύσις, that in the two meanings of οὐσία, "becoming present" and "being present," "being present" takes over and dominates so that "being present" becomes "that which always already underlies," later ὑποκείμενον and *substantia* as the under-lying (*sub-stans*), and therefore ground. Thus "grounding" becomes "being-caused." Substance as such then becomes the "being caused" of all and any given "being."[100] All of this is in consequence of *speaking*, as the "speaking to myself" that knowing is.

Western thinking names the relation to being of beings in a reversal, where the being-present of things takes over and masters their "how" of becoming-present in λόγος, where the I-speaking that produces disappears in favor of the already-present of any given being in itself. This reversal determines an outcome for human being, and also for God. In this reversal the 'I' that

[99] "der Entwurf dessen, was da hergestellt werden soll, das Kundmachen des Ausschens" (Heidegger, *Aristoteles Metaphysik* Θ, p. 151).

[100] Cf. Martin Heidegger, "Vom Wesen und Begriff der φύσις, Aristoteles' Physik B, 1," in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1967), 309-72. First published in Milan in 1958 in *Il Pensiero*, vol. 3. English translation by T. Sheehan, "On the Being and Conception of Physics: Aristotle's Physics B 1," in *Man and World* vol. 9 (The Hague, 1976). Esp. *Wegmarken*, 343: "wird die Seiendheit zwar als Ständigkeit begriffen, aber einseitig in der Richtung des Zum-voraus-stets-zugrunde-Liegenden. Daher fällt . . . das andere Wesensmoment der οὐσία aus: die *Anwesung*."

speaks-in-producing disappears in favor of something else, and so loses its determination to λόγος, yet it also retains the trace of its origin, understood no longer as the Greek experience of λόγος, but rather as relation.[101]

Heidegger never makes this entirely explicit, but it is clear that it was his thinking of God that entirely governed his critique. If 'I' am no longer the being that has and holds myself in λόγος,[102] (setting aside for now Heidegger's question "in what way does λόγος have me and hold me in itself"), then I am no longer that being whose being it is to come across and speak of the being of beings in their being, but rather I discover beings as already founded, as already being-present (in a sense as "already spoken," but with the meaning of this "already spoken" having been covered up to be thought of as "origin" and "being-caused").[103] Put another way, the "real" is not something I produce in "speaking," but into which I enter as already "there," already other than me, and so from where I am already displaced.

To discover this "real" as already there conceals the meaning of my existence, *Dasein*, in favor of understanding myself as that one who has to account for the origin of what I find (because I do not originate it), *these* beings in their already *being-present*. Such a thinking retains within it the trace of the being of beings and their being-known, precisely because in being "already spoken," which means *now* "originated" and "caused," a soul is implied—an originator, or even a "first cause."

Moreover, I am transformed *from* one who reaches into the future in order to speak (even to myself) of beings and bring them here, now, in their being *into* one who must reach into the past for the origin and primary cause of everything that is, as something extraneous to me.

So if I do not discover myself as that being who brings forth and gives these beings to be discovered in the being of their being (futurally), then (because being is the same as being-known) there must be some other 'I' for whom this has already occurred

[101] Cf. Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 95.

[102] Ibid., 348.

[103] Cf. ibid., 147.

(previously). Such an 'I' must be that 'I' who precedes every other 'I' and explains the origin of 'I'-being as such, overall: the 'I'-being of the God of metaphysics. This is the basis for Heidegger's claim that knowing is transcending, and that in metaphysics transcending understood in this way disappeared in favor of the already-transcendent, God. God, thought in metaphysics, is therefore the trace of my 'I', its universalization. Again, for this reason, the God of metaphysics (who is no more than human transcendence, an anthropomorphism) can never be the God of faith.

The God of metaphysics is therefore that being who precedes, founds, universalizes, and omnitemporalizes every possible being and time that my 'I' might ever be—*ens*, but only as *ens infinitum;* "God" as given in metaphysics, but nothing other than a projected and transcendent 'I'; myself, reflected back as wholly other than me.

Nihilism proclaims this 'I' dead, and so open to question. The 'I' that is this reflection becomes questionable in and as Nihilism. As 'I' become questionable in Nihilism, which means as 'I' enter the question, God as the universal 'I' is no longer "transcendent" being but "dead" in favor of something else transcending. Heidegger understands transcendence as a speaking of the being of beings. The speaking of the being of beings means different things in the history of being. As thought by Aristotle and Plato, the speaking of the being of beings means "the relationship leading from the changeable being to a being in repose. Transcendence, finally . . . is that highest being itself which can then also be called 'being.'"[104] Transcendence here, therefore, means "being" (in general) thought as "God," beings determined out of prior (thus "causal") being, universality sought in a higher (*meta-, über-, trans-*) sphere. Here, speaking means transcending into universality, transcendence experienced and thought as the being of beings in metaphysics. This is another way of understanding that for Heidegger perceiving and knowing as "striving- towards" or the "ὀρεκτὸν" described earlier are all

[104] "Transzendenz heißt schließlich . . . *höchste Seiende selbst*, das dann auch 'das Sein' genannt wird" (Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, 348).

what it means to transcend. In other words, knowing, speaking, and transcending are all different ways of understanding the same thing, the human being (*Dasein*) in its being (*das Sein*). It is for this reason that human freedom is "transcending into nothing."

If God is dead, *Dasein*, "Ich-heit," "egoity," 'I' find myself as that being which transcends in order to be, and which transcends into nothing, which is the mark of my finitude and the finitude of being. Therefore 'I' as questionable, am questioned, and my being-questioned brings me before myself *as myself* for the first time. Questioning is in this sense no different from transcending, which means that "knowing" and "speaking" (even to myself) are re-connected as two aspects of the same thing, my 'I'. All of this is also part of the "conversation" of *Dasein* with the whole history of philosophy. This is a conversation of the human-being with himself, that "speaking to oneself" which for Heidegger characterizes λόγος, or what he elsewhere calls the "worlding of world."[105]

CONCLUSION

When transcendence ceases to mean "highest being" for Heidegger, and comes to mean the finitude of being as transcending into nothing, then what "nothing" is comes to be heard for the first time. When 'I' come into the question, I can ask aloud "who now is God?" This question is above all mine, a question in consequence of my becoming *Dasein,* not as an object, but as self-existing. It can, in this sense, be a question which, as mine, concerns me with faith.

Heidegger's destructuring of this God simply insists that Heidegger's God is no *ens*, no object. Heidegger's interpretation of the Aristotelian/Platonic movement and Nietzsche's counter-movement is that bringing *this* God to language objectifies—it

[105] In for instance, the 1949 lectures "Das Ding" and "Die Kehre," published in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1954), 179; and *Die Technik und die Kehre* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1962), 44. English translations, "The Thing" in *Poetry Language Thought* (New York: Harper, 1971), 180; and *The Question Concerning Technology* (New York: Harper, 1977), 45. In both cases "worlding of world" relates to the being of God and to *das Geviert*, the "fourfold."

"renders," "reckons," or "e-valuates" God as *that* uppermost value which (in such a rendering) calls forth the devaluation of the uppermost values and the revaluation. The very bringing of this object "God" to life in language brings about such a God as already still-born.

It is for this reason that Heidegger can say in a small work entitled *Der Feldweg* that it is in the "unspoken" in speech that God is first God.[106] One must not miss the import of the word "first." The shift is from *primum ens*, "first being," to *Gott erst Gott*, "God only God." This shift takes place in a discussion of "*das Einfache*,"[107] the "one-fold" or "simple." So is Heidegger's God one, and simple, as has ever been claimed that God is? In other words, are we speaking of God's essence here, without reference to his supposed existence (as object)? Heidegger's God first comes about when no longer *ens*, hitched to being. This is no romantic fancy (as many have been apt to claim) but the fruits of a serious and prolonged meditation within the context of the European philosophical tradition.

Such a God, Heidegger says, only "winks" and "hints"[108] in consequence of the destruction (and here I mean *Destruktion*, *Abbau*) of metaphysics. Such winking and hinting is lost in speech, which objectifies. So what of the translation of *die Göttlichen* which I left untranslated at the beginning of this enquiry? *Die Göttlichen* is that part of the fourfold which is discussed most mysteriously in the 1949 lecture to the Bremen Society and later published as *Das Ding*, "The Thing." Here we find the most curious things happening—not least where the jug "jugs." In an

[106] Martin Heidegger, *Der Feldweg* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1989), 17. First published as *Der Zuspruch des Feldweges* in 1949. English translation by Thomas O'Meara, O.P., "The Pathway," *Listening* 2 (1967): 89.

[107] "Das Einfache verwahrt das Rätsel des Bleibenden und des Großen. Unvermittelt kehrt es bei den Menschen ein und braucht doch ein langes Gedeihen. Im Unscheinbaren des immer Selben verbirgt es seinen Segen. Die Weite aller gewachsenen Dinge, die um den Feldweg verweilen, spendet Welt. Im Ungesprochenen ihrer Sprache ist, wie der alte Lese- und Lebemeister Eckhart sagt, Gott erst Gott" (ibid.).

[108] Cf. Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, §§253-54, esp. p. 408f.: "In der Kehre spielen die Winke des letzten Gottes als Anfall und Ausbleib der Ankunft und Flucht der Götter und ihrer Herrschaftsstätte."

"after-word" appended to the published text as a "letter to a young student" Heidegger says,

> The default of God and *des Göttlichen* is absence. But absence is not nothing; rather it is precisely the presence, which must first be appropriated, of the hidden fullness and wealth of what has been and what, thus gathered, is presencing, of the divine in the world of the Greeks, in prophetic Judaism, in the preaching of Jesus.[109]

What else does this mean except that Heidegger's God is no longer presence?

Heidegger says not once but repeatedly throughout his work that metaphysics is *Anwesenheit*, presence. So this absence which is not nothing is that which comes after the completion of metaphysics, *in contrast* to the presence, the *Deus positivus* of metaphysics. The fourfold is described as earth and heaven, mortals and *die Göttlichen*. How now are we to translate this term left over like a loose thread from the beginning of this enquiry? First we must say what *die Göttlichen* is not. Despite all the attempts to say so, it is not gods, or divinities—we have already learnt that Heidegger's God belongs in the province of the *Einfache*, the simple, or one-fold. For Heidegger says (in a clear allusion to the *Beiträge*) "*die Göttlichen* are the hinting [*winkenden*] messengers of godhead. Out of the hidden sway of *die Göttlichen* God emerges as what he is, which removes him from any comparison with beings that are present."[110] What else does this say, but that God is not a being—does not exist—but has essence? *Die Göttlichen* are then neither God, nor a substitute for God, nor gods. But their proximation to the emergence of God, as what gives the emergence in its coming about, and their non-objectivity, non-object*ness*, means they belong to God, but are not he. There is thus no conflict in Heidegger between speech

[109] "Der Fehl Gottes und des Göttlichen ist Abwesenheit. Allein Abwesenheit ist nicht nichts, sondern sie ist die gerade erst anzueignende Anwesenheit der verborgenen Fülle des Gewesenen und so versammelt Wesenden, des Göttlichen im Griechentum, im Prophetisch-Jüdischen, in der Predigt Jesu" (Heidegger, "Das Ding," 177).

[110] "Die Göttlichen sind die winkenden Boten der Gottheit aus dem verborgenen Walten dieser erscheint der Gott in sein Wesen, das ihn jedem Vergleich mit dem Anwesenheit entzieht" (ibid., 171).

about *die Göttlichen* (plural) and *der Gott* (singular). Therefore I advance only this translation—lumbering, ugly: *die Göttlichen* are simply "the divinities" or perhaps "the godly-ies," or even "sacralisings," that aspect of beings in their being in which God might "sich ereignet,"[111] bring himself to appear and reveal himself. Not God, nor gods, but what in the worlding of world hints at God; Norsemen, or Olympians, only insofar as they point to something else; things that bring us close to God. The recovery of an understanding of such a self-revealing is in consequence of the overcoming of metaphysics, which means, of metaphysics having come to its full-end. *Die Göttlichen* are, therefore, in consequence of Nietzsche's "word."

Again it is important to understand that Heidegger is neither ruling out nor defining in advance what any given enquiry into the God of faith might be, for to do so would be to trespass into the ground of theology, which we have already learned he is only inclined to, but never actually does. This means that Heidegger is only ever carrying out what in *Being and Time* is named the "structural analytic of *Dasein*" *and nothing else* throughout his work.

This is the force of the lecture published as *Phänomenologie und Theologie,* with its opening refusal to discuss philosophy and theology as an opposition (while at the same time trying to bring into discussion the question of their relation), and the reason why the lecture remains in harmony with the "later" Heidegger's work—so much so that he can include with the 1970 edition a letter from 1964 and the instruction to the reader to pursue (for the sake of better understanding what was said in 1928) two of the pieces from the *Nietzsche* lectures considered earlier here. The term which has often eluded understanding is "pre-Christian" (*vorchristliche*). One is apt to think of the "pre-Christian" as what occurs prior to Christ's coming or, worse still, to interpret all time subsequent to the birth of Christ as "Christian" time. For Heidegger, however, the question of the "pre-Christian" is entirely related to faith, and so not to any universal time, but to "my" time, the time of "a" *Dasein*. So the "pre-Christian" is what

[111] Recalling here the phrase of the *Zürcher Seminar*.

is prior to *this* human existence's faith in Christ. This may be inferred (in Christian terms) to have two moments: one prior to baptism (or conversion) and the other prior to formation as a Christian person. It may even have a third moment as that being of a being which makes conversion possible, which might bear conversion, baptism, or being-in-Christ. Such a figuration is included in the subsequent life of faith.

> . . . so the Christian occurrence of rebirth raises up [*aufgehoben*] one's pre-faithful, that is, un-faithful (unbelieving) existence. . . . Indeed, one's pre-Christian existence is indeed existentially-ontically overcome. . . . "Overcome" does not mean disposed of, but possessed in a new way.[112]

One might dare the opinion that this passage, while written entirely from the perspective of that form of atheism I have identified, yet does no more than preserve the distinction between God and any given Christian *Dasein*. A very medieval preoccupation.

Who, then, is Heidegger's God? In *Identität und Differenz* we learned that God as *causa sui* is a God before whom we might neither sacrifice nor pray, neither bend the knee nor dance. Might we indeed do all these things before Heidegger's God? He says, "The god-less thinking which must abandon the god of philosophy, god as *causa sui,* is thus perhaps closer to the divine God. Here this means only: god-less thinking is more open to Him than onto-theo-logic would like to admit."[113]

In the *Zürcher Seminar* Heidegger points to that openness of God "so far as he meets human beings" which occurs in the dimension of being, so that being itself can never be indicated as a predicate for God. For the Christian theologian, at least, how does God open himself in the dimension of being? Twice, in 1931

[112] "So liegt doch im christlichen Geschehen als Wiedergeburt, daß darin die vorgläubige, d. i. ungläubige Existenz des Daseins aufgehoben ist . . . . Im Glauben ist zwar existenziell-ontisch die vorchristliche Existenz überwunden. . . . überwinden besagt nicht abstoßen, sondern in neue Verfügung nehmen" (Heidegger, *Phänomenologie und Theologie,* 29).

[113] "Demgemäß ist das gott-lose Denken, das den Gott der Philosophie, den Gott als Causa sui preisgeben muß, dem göttlichen Gott vielleicht näher. Dies sagt hier nur: Es ist freier für ihn, als es die Onto-Theo-Logik wahrhaben möchte" (Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz,* 65).

and again in 1935, Heidegger alludes to a particular meaning of the λόγος of St. John's Gospel, without making explicit at all what he means.[114] Dare we then advance the outrageous view that Heidegger's God may be no pagan deity, but could also just be that God whose most rigorous claim to orthodoxy is that he cannot be spoken, for it is he alone who might speak—might also positively and for the first time utter—a Word. And this God, the fruit of the atheism of philosophical research, is not that word which is already spoken before every other word so that no word may be spoken without this word taking over, founding and dominating it, but that Word which is the future and rebirth of every worded being, and just *that* Word who appears in the dimension of being, insofar as he is able? Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος . . .

[114] Heidegger, *Aristoteles Metaphysik Θ*, 147; idem, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 103.

Heidegger and Meister Eckhart on Releasement

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Heidegger mentions Meister Eckhart occasionally in some of his writings. However there is reason to presume that the proximity of the two thinkers is greater than it may appear. Indeed, Heidegger in private conversations emphasizes the authenticity of Meister Eckhart's experience of Being.

In the history of the disclosure of Being (*Lichtungsgeschichte des Seins*), every thinker has to bear the charge of responding to an essential mittence (*Geschick*) that is always unique. A philosopher's thought is fateful due to the irrevocable event in which Being comes to presence. The desire to detect "influences" is therefore a misunderstanding about the advent of truth, the epochal *a-letheia*, itself. Thinking means precisely the remembrance of this destiny of Being for its own sake.

In the metaphysical errancy Being is represented in terms of a sensuous or transcendent otherness, as the object of experience, or as the highest reason or foundation of what is in general. The ontologist may or may not oppose Being to the thinking subject; he will ordinarily not think of it as an accomplishment. Nevertheless, in spite of the dominating representation, the coming forth of Being as the presence of what is present has not been thoroughly forgotten. During a period in which Being has retired into a being among others, be it into the greatest, the remembrance of that which has to be thought occurs as a glimpse. In an otherwise "destitute time" (Hölderlin), there may be voices that release an inner recalling and that intimate the withdrawal of Being. They may utter man's essence out of the event of such a withdrawal, although they may not question the withdrawal as Being. In some of Meister Eckhart's sermons, especially in those

handed down to us in Middle High German, something like an uncon-cealedness calls to the listener. As witnesses of a genuine understanding of truth, these beckonings are quickly obstructed by Eckhart's scholastic vocabulary and Christian concerns.

Meister Eckhart's doctrine of man's identity with God was condemned by the Inquisition in 1329. Fortune punishes poets and preachers who anticipate the historical exposures of truth granted by Being. Bernhard Welte writes: "The trial against the theses of the Master before the pope's court at Avignon gives the impression of a trial brought in action by Being itself against him who daringly forstalls its destiny."[1]

Whenever Heidegger mentions Meister Eckhart, the context is a development of Heidegger's own essential thought: Being that lets beings be (*Gelassenheit*); the thinging of the thing (*dinc*) understood as the nearing of the world; man's essence (*Wesen*) needed by Being to uphold its truth; thinking as thanking (*Gedanc*); the unspoken speech (*ungesprochene Sprache*) that bestows a world; and last but not least, life without why (*ohne Warum*). Nevertheless Heidegger does not consider Meister Eckhart to be a "modern philosopher." Heidegger's attitude towards him is that of a critical interpreter of the history of Being. Ours will be that of a listener to releasement that grants beings forth to their beingness and Being itself to our thought. Therefore this is not an article on a topic of the history of philosophy.

I.

Being shows its way to be: *Gelassenheit,* which we translate as "releasement" or "letting-be." Before considering the difference between what releases and what is released, we shall summarize the seven passages in Heidegger's writings in which Meister Eckhart is mentioned.

[1] Bernhard Welte, "La métaphysique de Saint Thomas d'Aquin et la pensée de l'histoire de l'être chez Heidegger," in: *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques,* 50 (1966), p. 614. The only study hitherto analyzing the relation between Meister Eckhart and Heidegger is: Käte Oltmanns, *Meister Eckhart,* Frankfurt/M. 1935 and 1957, but her attempt to discover Heidegger's concept of freedom in Meister Eckhart has been received rather critically. Jacques Rolland de Reneville, *Aventure de l'Absolu,* The Hague, 1972, replaces the issue within the larger context of a reseizure of a hidden tradition in the history of the ontological question: announced in *marginal* texts of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, the understanding of Being as the reflexive Self becomes explicit in Eckhart, Hegel, Heidegger. This (anti-Eleatic) tradition views Being as not possessing itself, as requiring the mediation of an existence to overcome its unsatisfactoriness and the posing-opposing interrogation as which it appears. Unfortunately, the passages on Meister Eckhart are the least developed.

a) Die Frage nach dem Ding. Under this title Heidegger published the lectures given in Freiburg during the winter of 1935-36. In the section, "The Historical Basis of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason,*" the first remark on Meister Eckhart occurs. When Heidegger asks himself how to date the beginning of modern philosophy, he refuses to call Meister Eckhart the first modern philosopher:

> Modern philosophy is usually considered to have begun with Descartes (1596-1650), who lived a generation after Galileo. Contrary to the attempts, which appear from time to time, to have modern philosophy begin with Meister Eckhart or in the time between Eckhart and Descartes, we must adhere to the usual beginning.[2]

b) Zur Erörterung der Gelassenheit. In 1944-45, Heidegger wrote down a dialogue based on more extended notes from a conversation between a teacher, a scientist, and a scholar. This meditation on thinking starts with the distinction between two kinds of questions: "Scientist: . . . the question concerning man's nature is not a question about man." Thinking is what distinguishes man's nature. The essence of this nature, that is, the essence of thinking, will not be understood through a philosophy of man that analyses his knowledge and his willing. Our unfamiliar task consists in weaning ourselves from will. "Scholar: So far as we can wean ourselves from willing, we contribute to the awakening of releasement. Teacher: Say rather, to keeping awake for releasement."[3] The core of the meditation is releasement, which is neither a passivity nor an activity. Letting-be does not belong to the domain of the will. The dialogue then turns to Meister Eckhart:

> Teacher: . . . the nature of releasement is still hidden.
> Scholar: Especially so because even releasement can still be thought of as within the domain of will, as is the case with old masters of thought such as Meister Eckhart.
> Teacher: From whom, all the same, much can be learned.[4]

[2] Martin Heidegger, *Die Frage nach dem Ding,* Tübingen, 1962, p. 76; translation by W. B. Barton and V. Deutsch, *What is a Thing?* H. Regnery Co., Chicago, Ill., 1967, p. 98.

[3] Martin Heidegger, *Gelassenheit.* Pfullingen, 1959, p. 34; translation by J.M. Anderson and E.H. Freund, *Discourse on Thinking.* Harper and Row, New York, 1966, p. 60 f.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 36; translation p. 61 f.

c) In December, 1949, Heidegger delivered four lectures in Bremen, entitled *Das Ding, Das Gestell, Die Gefahr, Die Kehre.* The first and the last of these addresses mention Meister Eckhart.

Das Ding. Asking what makes a thing a thing, Heidegger distinguishes the "object" represented by sciences from the "nearness" that lets or grants the thing to thinking. He questions the jug on the table: what makes it be a jug? In its jugness, Heidegger says, the nearing of the world occurs. He attempts to fathom this nearing as a fourfold gathering. The earth and the sky, the mortals and the gods, are approximated by the jug. The essence, or way to be, of the thing is: to gather together. In the meditation on its thingness, a bearing-upon, a concern, is experienced. Both the Latin *res* and the Middle High German *dinc* indicate a forgetfulness of the gathering-approximating that characterizes a thing. Both metaphysical concepts have indeed come to designate "any *ens qua ens,* that is, everything present in any way whatever." Heidegger then mentions Meister Eckhart's use of *dinc.*

> "Accordingly Meister Eckhart uses the word 'thing' (*dinc*) for God as well as for the soul. God is for him the 'highest and uppermost thing.' The soul is a 'great thing.' This master of thinking in no way means to say that God and the soul are something like a rock: a material object. 'Thing' is here the cautious and abstemious name for anything that is at all. Thus Meister Eckhart says, adopting an expression of Dionysius the Areopagite: *Diu minne ist der natur, daz si den menschen wandelt in die dinc, di er minnet*–love is of such a nature that it changes man into the things he loves."[5]

d) Die Kehre. The last lecture of the Bremen series questions the way to be of technology. The essence of technology, Heidegger says, is danger. He calls this essence *Gestell*: things are established in advance, reduced to objects of calculation by a thought that merely represents, or are produced by a posing and disposing interest. Reduction and production are one mode of Being's way to be, namely, the mode in which Being "turns away" into forgottenness and thus turns against the truth of its way to be. But when the essential mittence of Being becomes *Gestell,* the possibility of a turning is hidden in the center of the danger. "The forgottenness of

[5] Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze.* Pfullingen, 1954, p. 175; translation by A. Hofstadter, *Poetry, Language, Thought.* Harper and Row, New York, 1971, p. 176.

the way to be of Being turns in such a way that with *this* turning the truth of the way to be of Being genuinely turns into beings." As a condition of this new turning, "man must before all else find his way back into the breadth of the scope of his way to be." He must experience himself as "needed by Being." Heidegger then says: "Bearing this in mind, we consider a saying from Meister Eckhart, in that we think it from out of its ground. It goes like this: 'Whoever is not of great essence, whatever work he does, it will yield nothing.' " And he comments briefly: "We think the great essence of man in that it belongs to the way to be of Being and is needed by it in order to uphold the way to be of Being in its truth."[6]

e) Was heisst Denken? This course was held in the summer of 1952. Heidegger suggested at that time an etymological parentage that has been discussed frequently ever since. *Denken,* to think, he writes, appears originally as *Gedanc.* One tends to translate: *Gedanke,* a thought. But "*zum Gedanc gehört der Dank,*" "to thinking pertains thanking."[7] 'Memory' and 'thanks' both stem from *Gedanc.* Thus the word means man's disposition or his heart. "Memory (*Gedächtnis*) initially signifies man's inner disposition (*Gemüt*) and devotion (*Andacht*)."[8] These words do not intend to denote merely the sensitive and the emotional side of human consciousness, but the essential way to be of human nature. In Latin, they designate what is called *animus* (as opposed to *anima*), in German *Seele,* in English 'soul.' To explain what he means by 'soul,' Heidegger then mentions Meister Eckhart's 'spark' of the soul: " 'Soul' in this case means not the principle of life, but that in which the spirit has its being, the spirit of the spirit, Meister Eckhart's 'spark' of the soul."[9]

f) Der Feldweg. In this pamphlet published in 1953, Heidegger meditates on the country path that runs out of his native village and past an oak tree. The path collects whatever comes to presence along its course

[6] Martin Heidegger, *Die Technik und die Kehre.* Pfullingen 1962, p. 39 f.; translation by K.R. Maly, *The Turning,* in *Research in Phenomenology,* I (1971), p. 6 f, with minor changes in the translation.

[7] Martin Heidegger, *Was heisst Denken?* Tübingen, 1954, p. 91; translation by F.D. Wieck and J.G. Gray, *What is Called Thinking?* Harper and Row, New York, 1968, p. 139. The translators omit this part of the sentence. Instead, they introduce five lines that are not in the text: "The Old English *thencan,* to think, and *thancian,* to thank, are closely related; the Old English noun for thought is *thanc* or *thonc*–a thought, a grateful thought, and the expression of such a thought; today it survives in the plural *thanks.* The 'thanc', that which is thought, the thought, implies the thanks."

[8] *Ibid.* p. 95; translation p. 148.

[9] *Ibid.* p. 96; translation p. 149.

into the simple and the same. The things that have their place along the path display a world. In their unspoken say, writes Heidegger, quoting Meister Eckhart, God becomes God.

> The simple preserves the enigma of the lasting and the great. It visits man unmediated and yet it needs a long thriving. In the inconspicuousness of what remains always the same, it hides its blessing. The breadth of all grown things that sojourn around the country path bestows a world. As Meister Eckhart, the old master of reading and of living, says: only in the unspoken of its speech, God is God.[10]

g) Der Satz vom Grund. This series of lectures was held in Freiburg in the winter of 1955-56. It is a long commentary on Leibniz's tenet, *nihil est sine ratione,* nothing is without reason. During the fifth session of the series, Heidegger quoted a famous aphorism of Angelus Silesius, Meister Eckhart's 17th century versifier: "The rose is without why, it flowers because it flowers; it pays no heed to itself, asks not if it is seen."[11] This aphorism, as it stands, is in contradiction to the principle of reason: the rose flowers "without why," for no reason. There is no foundation to the flower's flowering, no *arché* and no *telos,* no cause other than itself. Leibniz's principle expresses a general certitude: everything that is can be asked to give its reasons. The "without why" of the verse weakens that certitude. This doctrine of "life without why" is Meister Eckhart's most genuine teaching. Heidegger notes:

> "The entire verse is of such surprisingly clear and terse construction that one might assume that extreme acuteness and profundity of thought belong to any genuine and great mysticism. Now, that is indeed the truth. Meister Eckhart bears witness to it."[12]

[10] Martin Heidegger, *Der Feldweg.* Frankfurt, 1953, p. 4. The expression "der alte Lebe- und Lesemeister" stems from a proverb attributed to Meister Eckhart himself.
Cf. F. Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart, Predigten und Traktate,* Leipzig, 1857 and Aalen, 1962, p. 599, l.19.

[11] Die Ros' ist ohn warum; sie blühet, weil sie blühet,
Sie acht' nicht ihrer selbst, fragt nicht, ob man sie siehet.
Angelus Silesius, *Der cherubinische Wandersmann,* Basel, 1955, p. 35.

[12] Martin Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund,* Pfullingen, 1957, p. 71.

II.

We shall understand the way to be of releasement only by responding for our own part to its claim. The particular shape that the concept receives in Meister Eckhart's and Heidegger's thought cannot appear except within our own experience–as Meister Eckhart says concerning detachment: "He who wants to understand it must be very detached."[13] I have shown elsewhere how a particular text of Heidegger's introduces the reader to the diverse aspects of *Gelassenheit,* and have exhibited its continuities and discontinuities with Meister Eckhart's preaching of the apprenticeship in releasement.[14]

What does ordinary existence, understood as an accomplishment, already know about releasement? It may know what the word says: the root of the English 'releasement,' *laxare,* is the same as that of the French *laisser* and the German *lassen,* from which *Gelassenheit* is derived. As a noun, it undergoes a change in meaning and comes to denote, even as a verb, not to 'let go,' but rather the opposite, to 'let be'; it suggests, not carelessness, but the highest form of care. Ordinary existence knows that it can let things be. It may learn, thereafter, to let not only one thing be, but all things. Ultimately, it may come to let itself be, and let God be.

1) Let something be. What happens when one says: "I let it be"? Something is set free that was retained within a network of references to things and purposes. A grip is loosened, a contraction of the fingers slackens. Apprehension turns into ease and poise. The eye too is relieved, namely from staring at the same object. Man ceases to possess, and the thing is freed into its own being. It is seen for what it is, not for its usefulness. It is neither handled nor manipulated: no hands wield it, and insofar as utility hides or alters its thing-nature, the object becomes a thing. Its thingness appears. Supported by no exterior 'why,' it upholds itself. Justified by no motivation, for instance man's security, it is now

[13] Pf. 209,30.–We use the following abbreviations when quoting from Meister Eckhart's German sermons:
DW–Meister Eckhart, *Die Deutschen Werke* (vol. I, II, V), Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 1936 ff.
Pf–Franz Pfeiffer, *Meister Eckhart, Predigten und Traktate.* Leipzig, 1857, and Aalen, 1962, t. 2.
Both references are followed by the page and the line quoted.

[14] Reiner Schürmann, *Maitre Eckhart ou la joie errante,* Paris, 1972, pp. 340-367.

independent. It becomes what it is, a thing. Neither represented nor ready-to-hand, it stands against nothing, it stands on its own.

Meister Eckhart suggests how much an object possessed obstructs man's view: one talks easily of God and of one's property, but in fact only man's safety is seen with respect to tomorrow. "Many people say: 'I have a hundred bushels of corn and an equal measure of wine this year; I have firm confidence in God!' Very well, I reply, you have firm confidence–in the corn and the wine!"[15] Ready to be consumed, the corn and the wine are not seen as such, they could as well be rice and beer. They are objects seen in their capacity to assure man's nutrition, and consumption is the extreme form of appropriating a thing. Releasement, opposed to consumption, is indeed understood by Meister Eckhart within the domain of the will, as the Scholar affirms in the *Conversation on a Country Path.* At this level, the best translation of *Gelassenheit* would be 'detachment,' which has an ascetic connotation: indifference to possession and sustenance.

Let something be: to Meister Eckhart, this attitude is a preparation of man's will to accomplish God's will. I would be released, he says, "if I were detached from [the images of things], so that I did not regard them as mine to take or to leave, to expect or to enjoy, and if I were free and empty of them in this very moment to accomplish God's will."[16] The first aspect of *Gelassenheit* in Meister Eckhart is a voluntary emptiness in man's preoccupation and imagination. Eckhart denies man any quest for security. This denial is not enforced primarily in order to remember the thingness of the thing, but in order to urge the purposelessness of the will. Here lies the difference with Heidegger.

What makes a thing a thing? We know the first step of Heidegger's answer: traditionally, all that is, however little or great, has been represented as a thing, *dinc,* even God. Through this particular mode of thought, representation, 'thing' has ultimately come to designate material objects such as a rock or equipment. Yet the destiny of this word reveals a deeper destiny. All that is, any 'thing,' in this mode of thought is known in terms of one fundamental quality. When the thing becomes equipment, this fundamental quality appears as usefulness and reliability. God, too, when understood as the highest being, is objectivated in his usefulness and reliability. However, what is a thing? Usefulness and reliability tell us nothing about its thingly character. A new attitude towards the thing is

[15] Pf. 178, 6-9.

[16] DW I, 25,8–26,1.

necessary if we want to know its nature, Heidegger says. He therefore questions the work of art. A pair of peasant shoes enter man's world in order to be worn. They are ordinarily not considered for themselves, but precisely for their usefulness and reliability. When they are worn out, they are thrown away. Even when looked at in a moment's pensive mood, they tell more about the toilsome tread of the worker than about their thingness. Van Gogh has painted such peasant shoes. As a work of art, their usefulness and reliability disappear. Now they are seen for what they are, peasant shoes. "The art work lets us know what shoes are in truth."[17] In the work of art, the truth of a being sets itself to work. What is at work in such a work? "The disclosure of a particular being in its Being, the happening of truth."[18]

With regard to releasement, Heidegger's meditation on the artwork is only a preparation. The happening of truth is never unconditioned. Its condition is releasement. The artwork can prepare releasement, as can poetry, technology and thought. When the peasant shoes are 'let loose,' or released from, their usefulness and reliability, their truth–thingness–occurs. Releasement is the attitude that makes possible truth's coming into presence. Thus, for Heidegger, releasement manifests the thing's way to be.

One tends to agree with the Scholar's reserve: when Meister Eckhart speaks of releasement, his intention is to mortify man's attachment and thus make man discover his truth, which is divine. When Heidegger speaks of releasement, it is to manifest the way to be of a thing, the thing's truth. Heidegger's thought is not centered on man. For both, releasement aims at a loosening; but Meister Eckhart arouses man to untie himself from his false bonds and make himself depend upon the only true bond, God. Heidegger is concerned with disentangling the thing in order for Being to cast itself towards thought. Being is not understood here as the cause or the foundation of the thing, but simply as the presence of what is present. Freed from the multiple connections of objectivity, the thing gives access to Being. The nature of the artwork is to 'let' Being happen. What is the artwork's way to be? Heidegger says, "the letting happen (*Geschehenlassen*) of the advent of the truth of what is."[19]

In the same attitude, releasement, Meister Eckhart questions man's

[17] Martin Heidegger, *Holzwege.* Frankfurt, 1950, p. 24; translation by Albert Hofstadter, *Poetry, Language, Thought.* New York, 1971, p. 35.

[18] *Ibid.* p. 27; translation p. 38.

[19] *Ibid.* p. 59; translation p. 72.

truth and thus experiences the will of God, and Heidegger questions the thing's truth and experiences the advent of Being. Is a radicalization of their common attitude thinkable, and if so, what can it tell us about Being in either doctrine?

2) Let all things be. Can he who says "I let it be" also come to say: "I let all things be?" Can he hold nothing, cling to nothing? Is not such a total disinterest opposed to life? Indeed, Meister Eckhart speaks of *Abgeschiedenheit;* those who have passed away, the deceased, are in German usage called the *Abgeschiedenen.* But does releasement, as it has appeared in the examples of the wine and the corn in Meister Eckhart, and the work of art in Heidegger, mean such an outrageous lack of interest in the thing left to itself? Let all things be: this attitude might suggest a supreme interest in their Being, rather than indifference. Heidegger, whom we consider first, seems to think so:

> "What seems easier than to let a being be just the being that it is? Or does this turn out to be the most difficult of tasks, particularly if such an intention–to let a being be as it is–represents the opposite of the indifference that simply turns its back upon the being itself? We ought to turn toward the being, think about it in regard to its Being, but by means of this thinking at the same time let it rest upon itself in its way to be." [20]

Let all things be: to Heidegger, this task appears as less a work of death than as a necessity for life near the origin. "Releasement toward things and openness to the mystery belong together." [21] Not to obstruct the way towards a fundamental character of what is in general leads to original thinking, "meditative thinking" as opposed to "calculative thinking." [22] Everything that is–is. The self-refusal of the thingness of the thing cannot be overcome with regard to only one particular being. The work of art is a privileged occurrence of the advent of truth–it is the one in which this advent becomes explicit to correct understanding–but it is not the only chance for original thought. The essence of everything that is has to be thought of. That is not to say that we could force our way to some comprehensive theory, but that the essence of what is in general only appears to unconstrained and steadfast meditation. It cannot be perceived

[20] *Ibid.* p. 20; translation p. 31, with minor changes.
[21] Martin Heidegger, *Gelassenheit,* p. 26; translation, p. 55.
[22] Ibid. p. 15; translation p. 46.

(*wahrgenommen*) it can only be received (*vernommen*) out of the uncon-cealedness or presence of what is in general. In other words: the truth of Being opens its essence only to perfectly released thinking. Releasement recognizes presence in everything that is present. For Heidegger, when all things are 'left' to their openness, Being can be thought of in all things.

For Meister Eckhart also, all things must be 'left' to themselves. Again, releasement is the condition of authentic thinking: only when all that is has been abandoned do things reveal their true being, nothingness. "All creatures are pure nothingness. I do not say that they are of little worth or that they are anything at all: they are pure nothingness." [23] Not that releasement destroys their being. Releasement makes it plain that they have no being. Meister Eckhart's terms must be taken literally: the being of things, in his religious perspective, belongs not to the things but to God, who created them. Things are received from elsewhere. "Being is God." Therefore if God retired from his creation, things would fall back into what they are: pure nothingness. "What has no being is nothing. Creatures have no being of their own, for their being depends on the presence of God. If God withdrew from his creatures even for a single moment, they would all perish." [24]

Now the revealing power of Meister Eckhart's 'releasement' comes to the fore: let all things be and a being will manifest itself which is not theirs. It is their presence, but if it withdrew, nothing would be present any more. 'Presence,' here, is understood as the ontological ground, not Being, but beingness. Things are convicted of nothingness, *nichts.* The Middle High German word *niht* is the negation of *iht,* 'something.' All things, says Eckhart, are not 'something,' they have no *iht.* This term designates a being as such, the *entitas* of *ens,* or *ousia* of *on.* Heidegger could say *Seiendheit des Seienden,* [25] the beingness of a being. Things in general are *niht,* they cannot be represented as things. Meister Eckhart calls a particular being *ihtes iht,* negated as *nihtes niht.* The *iht* of what is present is God, creatures are nothing. [26]

[23] DW I, 69,8–70,1.
[24] DW I, 70, 2-4.
[25] Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze,* p. 74.
[26] Angelus Silesius summarizes this teaching:

Mensch, sprichst du dass dich Ichts von Gottes Lieb' abhält,
So brauchst du noch nicht recht, wie sich's gebührt, der Welt,

op. cit. p. 39.

To a perfectly released person, Meister Eckhart says, all things are equal, they all utter one single word: beingness (*iht, esse,* God). "In Him all things are equally mine; and if we are to reach this possession where all things are ours, we must seize Him equally in all things, not more in one than in the other, for He is equally in all things." [27] *Esse est Deus:* recover man's freedom, uncover the beingness of beings, and discover God: this threefold death to individuality is but one and the same birth to universality.[28] As the possession of "this and that," *diz und daz,* disappears, beingness, God, comes into possession. "If God is to enter, the creature must go out,"[29] for "God does not tolerate at all that something may be empty."[30] Such dialectics of possession and dispossession are thought of in the realm of the will, and so is releasement. If one lets all things be, if one becomes "as free as he was before he was,"[31] his will receives all things in their beingness. "In fact, all wonder is taken away from such a man, and all things are essentially united in him. Therefore he gets nothing new from future events nor from any accident, for he dwells in a single Now that is, at all times, unceasingly new."[32]

At this stage of the investigation, releasement in Meister Eckhart and in Heidegger seems somewhat closer than in our first approach. Although Meister Eckhart still thinks of it as pertaining to the domain of the will, it is now oriented towards the disclosure of *iht, esse,* in beings. Both authors think here of releasement as the condition of a manifestation: that the presence of what is present may manifest itself to thought. However, it has seemed necessary to use two different translations for what releasement encounters: in Heidegger 'Being,' in Meister Eckhart 'beingness.' Releasement reflects the ambiguity of presence: in Heidegger it means mere openness, in Meister Eckhart, God. We shall have to consider whether or not the experience of the openness, Being, that grants beings to thought,

[27] DW I, 81, 7-10.

[28] "Omne commune inquantum commune, deus,"
Latin Sermon VI, n. 53.
Dass du nicht Menschen liebst, das tust
du recht und wohl,
Die Menschheit ists, die man im
Menschen lieben soll.
Angelus Silesius, *op. cit.* p. 29.

[29] Pf. 12, 9-10.

[30] Pf. 28, 16.

[31] DW I, 25,2.

[32] DW I, 34,7–35,2.

and the experience of God, beingness, that proffers creatures to will, entertain phenomenally a necessary kinship with each other.

3) Let yourself be. Can releasement go so far as to detach man from himself? Again, the question sounds like a threat to subsistence. Man must at least take care of his body. Care implies concern; consequently, I may well deprive myself of all physical and mental possessions, but to abandon my own being would simply be to put an end to it. One might grant a partial unconcern about oneself, and reasonably accept Heidegger's invitation to release that part of ourselves that is subject to technology. "We let technical devices enter our daily life, and at the same time leave them outside, that is, let them alone, as things which are nothing absolute, but remain dependent upon something higher." [33] Still, Meister Eckhart makes no concessions: "Could you become totally ignorant of all things, you might even loose the knowledge of your body." [34] He goes farther: you must "forget yourself and all creatures"; [35] "you must release yourself, let yourself completely be, only then are you correctly released"; [36] "as long as anything human lives on in us, we do not see God." [37]

The phenomenon of releasement has shown two faces, one ascetic, the other manifestative. Self-detachment also is on the one hand a matter of will, and therefore, if we are released, "suffering is not suffering any more," [38] but on the other hand it is a manifestation of man's way to be. To let all things be is to discover their way to be: beingness, nothingness. To let myself be is to discover my own way to be: this is not simply nothingness. His approach to man thus leads Meister Eckhart to the essential dialectics of Being.

Man participates in created things, he has an *iht,* a beingness, as do all creatures. But if man is to let everything be, even himself, he cannot be entirely what he must let be. If releasement is voluntary, the will must refer to something more than what is released. The papal bull against Meister Eckhart condemns seventeen propositions, two of which begin as follows: "There is something in the soul that is uncreated and uncreat-

[33] Martin Heidegger, *Gelassenheit,* p. 25;
Anderson and E.H. Freund, *Discourse on Thinking.* New York 1966, p. 54.

[34] Pf. 7, 12-13.

[35] Pf. 25, 35-36.

[36] Pf. 260, 1-11.

[37] Pf. 140, 17, with the corrections indicated in Quint, J., *Die Überlieferung der deutschen Predigten Meister Eckharts,* Bonn, 1932, p. 419f.

[38] Pf. 42, 12, with the corrections indicated in Quint, *op. cit.*, p. 113 ff.

able. . ."; "Everything that belongs to the divine nature belongs also to the just and divine man."[39] Besides the created *iht*, there is an uncreated *wesene* (the modern German *Wesen*) in the soul; but this cannot be represented in the metaphysical categories of subject or object. By his *wesene*, man is of the nature of God. "As long as there is *iht* close to a being's *wesene*, it is not recreated."[40] Sometimes Meister Eckhart calls this 'something' in the soul *ground*, or *spark*, or *castle*. The similarity between God and man is now abolished by identity: they are *ein unglîch*, identical, but not similar. "I am translated into God and I become one with him–one substance, one being (*wesene*) and one nature."[41] This 'translation' is as ordinary as releasement. It is not an extraordinary event. In the depth of the soul, man is naturally released, and only there *is* he. In his exterior faculties, he has to become what in his core he is already: a perfectly released *wesene*. In some texts, 'releasement' designates the very way of this becoming.

To let myself be, according to Meister Eckhart, implies a new understanding of Being. A difference has appeared between *iht* and *wesene*. The former is created and must be released, the latter is uncreated and is naturally released. It is not a faculty of the soul; the highest faculties, intelligence and will, are only rooted in it. In his inner knowledge, man still belongs to *iht*. Of man's *wesene* there is no science, but only ignorance. "The inner knowledge is based as the intellect upon our soul's being. However, it is not the soul's being, it is only rooted there."[42] Neither intellect nor will reach the soul's being. "Where one knows nothing, there it imparts and reveals itself."[43]

Meister Eckhart thinks of Being as the difference between beingness and the soul's being. Man is the place of this difference. He alone manifests Being's twofold way to be: nothingness in everything created, and accomplishment in the ground of the soul. *Wesene*, the soul's being, is not to be understood as a support (*suppositum*), but as an event. In his inner self, man is a process, a happening. Man releases his nature when he "becomes

[39] Meister Eckhart, *Deutsche Predigten und Traktate*. Herausgegeben und übersetzt von J. Quint, Munich, 1955, p. 451, n. 13 and p. 454, n. 1.

[40] Pf. 88,8.

[41] Pf. 40,32-33. Cf. Pf. 300, 7-11: " 'I am,' he touches *wesene*. The Masters say: all creatures can say 'I,' that is a universal word. Only the word 'sum,' 'am,' nobody can utter properly except God alone."

[42] Pf. 39, 15-17. The text says twice 'wesene.'

[43] Pf. 14, 39.

fruitful out of the most noble of all grounds; to say it even better: verily, out of that same ground from which the Father is bringing forth his eternal Word."[44] "Working and becoming are one; God and I are one in this accomplishment (*gewürke*)."[45] Being can be genuinely understood only out of actual releasement, but releasement culminates with the birth of the Word in the core of the soul. This birth and the eternal birth of the Son in God are one and the same. At every moment a released man engenders the eternal Word in its divinity. The identity of God and man as a birth *is* Being. Beingness, then, is no more. There is no knowledge of Being other than this ignorance about the unspeakable birth; no discourse, only an accomplishment. Being therefore cannot be represented as being different from releasement (as the Inquisition's court did when it rejected Meister Eckhart's teaching of the identity between God and man as pantheistic).

The proximity of Meister Eckhart and Heidegger is now undeniable: Being is primarily an event; not a noun, but a verb, "not the essence of things, but an accomplishment (verbally)";[46] as *wesene* it cannot be represented, it can only be experienced within and as releasement; man is the place in which the difference between beingness and Being, or *iht* and *wesene*, can be thought. For Meister Eckhart, to say that Being is the difference between the soul's being and beingness, and to say that it is *wesene*, means the same, because in releasement beingness is no more. Heidegger writes: "Being preserves within itself the difference between Being and beings; but it can only clear this difference in its truth when the difference accomplishes itself properly."[47] This accomplishment, according to Heidegger, is what the most recent offspring of metaphysics, technology and its calculative thought, cannot think. The achievements of our age "captivate, bewitch, dazzle and beguile man,"[48] but the way to be of technology remains hidden. Releasement remembers technology as a mode of unveiling. To let technology be does not mean, therefore, to disdain machines and highways, but rather to step out of the oblivion of the Difference as such. The apprenticeship of such a "step back" is the

[44] DW I, 31, 2-4.

[45] DW I, 114, 4-5.

[46] Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, p. 271: Nicht "als Wesenheit der Dinge, sondern Wesen (verbal)." Cf. *Nietzsche*. Pfullingen 1961, vol. 2: "Welches ist 'das Wesen' der Metaphysik? Wie west sie?," p. 344.

[47] Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, p. 78.

[48] Martin Heidegger, *Gelassenheit*, p. 27; translation *op. cit.* p. 56.

apprenticeship of releasement; then Being appears as the accomplishment of an opening, a mode of which is withdrawal.

However, Meister Eckhart and Heidegger do not mean exactly the same thing, although they seem to agree on man (place of the difference), releasement (condition and way to be of Being), and Being (accomplishment). To let ourselves be, is for Heidegger an historical attitude, while for Eckhart it is totally unhistorical. Even more, Eckhart means to escape from history:

> God is in this power as in the eternal Now. If the spirit were always united with God in this power, man could never grow old. For the Now in which God made the first man, the Now in which the last man will disappear, and the Now in which I am speaking, are all the same in God, nothing but one Now.[49]

As a Christian thinker, Meister Eckhart gives no attention in his doctrine of birth to the historical Incarnation of the Word.[50] In this respect, his thought is even less historical than that of the great 13th century theologians.

Heidegger's thought is thoroughly historical:

> The thought of the history of Being lets Being arrive within the space in which man unfolds his nature. This area of unfolding is the abode with which Being as Being endows itself. This means: the thought of the history of Being lets Being come forth as Being itself.[51]

History (*Geschichte*) is understood as a sending or a mittence (*Geschick*). Only in this sense is Being an accomplishment. Heidegger thinks of the historical advent of Being in the area of man's existence, and of man's reply to this advent. Meister Eckhart thinks of the Word born of man and God, identical in their eternal cores. For both, Being is an event, but Meister Eckhart does not think of it in terms of an historical correspondence to the epochs opened by disclosing Being. For both, man is the place of the difference, but for Heidegger, this difference clears (*lichtet*) itself historically:

[49] DW I, 34, 1-5.

[50] Pf. 3,6f; cf Angelus Silesius, *op. cit.* p. 23:
Wird Christus tausendmal zu Bethlehem geboren
und nicht in dir: du bleibst noch ewiglich verloren.

[51] Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 2, p. 389.

> The manner in which it, Being, gives itself, is itself determined by the way in which it clears itself. This way, however, is an historic, always epochal character that comes to presence for us as such only when we release it into its own having been present.[52]

When the difference is given as technology, Being gives itself as the hidden way to be of what Heidegger calls *Gestell*. Finally, even releasement has an historical dimension: Being's epochal way to be is 'remembered,' released into its having been present. "The thought of the history of Being lets (*lässt*) Being come forth as Being itself." Remembering, opposed to calculative thinking, lets Being be.

Heidegger's thought is historical, Meister Eckhart's is not. But 'history,' here, means neither world history, nor the history of salvation. *Geschick*, mittence, tries to utter the fate that opens the horizon in which men may dwell for a given epoch. Meister Eckhart as a late Scholastic, is unaware of this second sense of history. However, when he speaks about the soul's being and the birth, both his vocabulary and design point in a direction where only one step is necessary to think Being in its relation to history. Being is not a foundation, but an event; not a genus, but engenderment. Once the metaphysical foundations of substance are shaken, the way is free to think Being and Time. Hegel, with an explicit reference to Meister Eckhart, will accomplish this step. Heidegger, out of the *fundamentum concussum* and the becoming of the absolute spirit raises the question of releasement as the question of Being (*Seinsfrage*).

The three points of convergence between Meister Eckhart and Heidegger—man as the place of the difference, Being as event, releasement—also manifest the radical opposition between the two thoughts: one is essentially historical, the other not at all. Both speak of Being as an accomplishment, but while Meister Eckhart means the eternal birth of the Word in the ground or *wesene* of the soul, Heidegger means the historical opening by which Being grants itself to thought.

4) Let God be. Religious authors have sometimes recommended total detachment from the world in order that man may place his hope entirely in God, the first cause and foundation of everything. Ultimately, this is not Meister Eckhart's advice. We must let God be as well. Only then will releasement be true. Meister Eckhart's theory of releasement culminates in

[52] Martin Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz*. Pfullingen, 1957, p. 65; translation by J. Stambaugh, *Identity and Difference*, New York, 1969, p. 67.

the "life without why." This view aims at the destruction of all science: in opposition to Leibniz's later tenet, Meister Eckhart teaches that life, Being, and God are *sine ratione.* To know the first cause and foundation of all things is not yet knowledge. There is no science of Being or God, no metaphysics and no theology. Meister Eckhart's thought of "life without why" attempts to fracture precisely what Heidegger calls the onto-theological constitution of metaphysics.

> Why do you love God?–I don't know, because of God.–Why do you love truth?–Because of truth.–Why do you love justice?–Because of justice.–Why do you love the good?–Because of the good.–Why do you live?–Forsooth! I don't know! But I am happy to live. [53]

Someone might question his existence: "Why live?" Life has no reason, Eckhart answers, it is its own reason. "It lives from its own ground and springs out of itself; therefore it lives on without why, as it lives only for itself." The destruction of the onto-theological foundation entails the destruction of moral science: "Thus, if you ask a genuine man who acts out of his own ground: 'Why are you doing what you do?,' he will reply, if his answer is correct: 'I do it because I do it!' "[54] As a rose that flowers without why, man's life is an unexplained blossoming out of his own core.[55] "Those who, with their deeds, look after something, those who work for a why, are bondsmen and hirelings."[56]

To abandon all things in the world, except God, is to abandon nothing.[57] As the rigorous conclusion of releasement, God vanishes, *got entwird.*[58] The soul breaks through God and reaches the "still wilderness where no one is at home." This breakthrough leads the soul beyond God into the "immovable rest," the "nameless nothing," the "unnatured nature," the "naked Godhead." "God and the Godhead differ from each other as much as heaven and earth." [59] The origin of the soul is beyond

[53] DW II, 27, 7-10.
[54] DW I, 92, 3-6.
[55] See above, note 11.
[56] DW II, 253, 4f.
[57] Gelassenheit fäht Gott; Gott aber selbst zu lassen,
ist ein' Gelassenheit, die wenig Menschen fassen.
Angelus Silesius, op. cit. p. 42.
[58] Pf. 180, 18.
[59] Pf. 180, 15.

'God' understood as Creator or as Father. God, too, must let 'God' be. He must die to his distinctions. For as long as he retains the qualities that result from otherness (attributes, divine persons), he will never know the ground of the soul:

> "God himself will never, even for a moment, look in there, and he never has, as long as he exists in the manner and in the possession of his Persons. This is easy to understand, since this onefold One is without manner or property. And so, if God is to look into it, it will cost him all his divine names and his personal selfhood. He must leave it altogether outside, if he will look inside." [60]

A God who can be named has a 'why,' for example, Creation or Salvation. In his 'why' there is no Being. God and man must both abandon their 'why' if Being is to grant its truth. All 'why' is related to an *iht; wesene* is without why. "Our entire life must become *wesene.*"[61] "I pray God that he may quit me of God, for my essential being (*min wesenlich wesene*) is above God."[62] Above God is nothing. If there were something, that thing would be God. Therefore the breakthrough of which Meister Eckhart speaks leads again into nothingness, understood now as the negation of *wesene.* The active identity between the ground of God and the ground of the soul cannot be represented. It accomplishes itself in *unwesene.* "The soul reaches into nothingness and follows the God who acts in nothingness."[63] *Unwesene,* here, is opposed to *niht* as Being is opposed to beingness and the Godhead to God.

Meister Eckhart thinks of Being as *gewürke,* accomplishment, and inseparably as *unwesene,* nothingness. To think these two in their unity is to understand Meister Eckhart's doctrine of Being. Only the breakthrough beyond God, the highest 'thing,' is. Being is no thing, nothing. To let God be is not only the condition of a genuine understanding of Being, but it is Being's essence itself. The way to be of Being is to let all things be. Being cannot be numbered among beings. The event in which the unknown core of the soul and the unknown core of God return into their unalloyed identity–in other words, the happening of releasement–is Being's way to

[60] DW I, 43, 3-9.
[61] DW I, 132, 2.
[62] DW II, 502, 6.
[63] DW I, 151, 11. The text repeats *'unwesene.'*

be. All beings, from wine and corn to God, are then released. Being manifests itself within and as such unconditioned releasement. At the last stage, releasement is no more a condition for the experience of the truth, but a name for Being's way to be. Although he does not formulate explicitly this conclusion, it underlies his most significant passages. The breakthrough is, the Godhead is. But also: the breakthrough is nothing, the Godhead is nothing. Being's way to be, as releasement, is nothingness. Heidegger too interprets Being as nothingness.

Heidegger's thought has sometimes been called 'nihilism.' In 1943, he replied to these objections: "Wherever and however far scientific investigation may search beings all over, it will never find Being. . . . What is plainly other than all beings is not-being. But this nothingness accomplishes itself as Being."[64] Being's way to be is nothingness as an accomplishment, but not vulgar nihilism. Being is not a thing, it withdraws into nothing. This withdrawal, although historical, affects man's nature: he is at the same time and under the same aspect "shepherd of Being" and "placeholder of nothingness."[65]

God, represented as the highest of all substances, is only the most useful and reliable cipher in a world of calculations. "The divinities are the beckoning messengers of the godhead. Out of the hidden sway of the divinities the god emerges as what he is, which removes him from any comparison with beings that are present."[66] The historical event, the mittence, which sends all beings into their presence permits, by way of a hint, a thought of the Godhead beyond the onto-theological God. The remembrance of this destiny Heidegger says, "would give a beckoning into the Godhead of God."[67]

When God is let be, the "holy sway of the Godhead" can be praised.[68] Being then shows its way to be: accomplishment and nothingness inseparably. Heidegger argues that when Being grants itself so purely, philosophy ceases. Its work is the thoughtful preparation of a pure advent that can be neither forced nor represented, but only received and chanted. Even the

[64] Martin Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik?* Frankfurt/M. 1960, p. 45; translation by R.F.C. Hull and A. Crick, *Existence and Being.* Chicago 1949, p. 353, with minor changes.

[65] Martin Heidegger, *Holzwege,* p. 321.

[66] Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze,* p. 177; translation by A. Hofstadter, *op. cit.,* p. 178.

[67] *Ibid.* p. 222; not yet translated.

[68] *Ibid.* p. 150; translation p. 150.

history of Being then ceases. The thinker remembers Being, the poet celebrates the holy. And the mystic? Heidegger takes care to distinguish him from the poet. The mystic begets God. To Heidegger, Meister Eckhart is a speculative mystic rather than a poet struck by the Godhead. The latter is exemplified by Hölderlin. "The natural stand of the poet is grounded not on the conception (*Empfängnis*) of God, but on the comprehension (*Umfängnis*) by the holy."[69]

Following the indications of releasement, we have run through the range of 'things' that man can let be: something, everything, himself, God. In the very process of the inquiry, releasement has changed its sense. In the beginning, it appears as an attitude of man, towards the end as "Being's way to be." Despite what the Scholar says in Heidegger's *Discourse on Thinking,* Meister Eckhart does not throughout his preaching think of releasement as within the domain of the will. In the desert of the Godhead, when releasement is total, there is nothing to be willed. But the breakthrough then accomplishes itself.

We may summarize the different aspects of releasement as follows:

1) In Meister Eckhart, it is a voluntary emptiness of man's preoccupation with things and images, in order to do God's will. In Heidegger, it is the condition for a thing's truth to happen.

2) In Meister Eckhart, releasement discloses the creature's nothingness; it urges the death to individuality and the birth to beingness in general. In Heidegger it is the condition for all things' truth, openness or unconcealedness.

3) To Meister Eckhart, Being appears as the difference between the beingness that is released and the soul's being (*wesene*), that is, the event of letting. "Being is the difference" and "Being is *wesene*" mean the same. In Heidegger, Being is understood as the historical issue of the difference released into its epochal horizons.

4) Both in Meister Eckhart and Heidegger, releasement becomes the name of Being's way to be. Accomplishment and nothingness are its two faces. But is not this ultimate accord entirely due to an equivocation of 'Being'? We have to examine what Heidegger means when he says that Being, as nothingness and as accomplishment, lets beings be.

[69] Martin Heidegger, *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung.* Frankfurt/M. 1963, p. 67.

III.

During a seminar held in Le Thor, France, in 1969, Heidegger distinguished between three acceptations of 'letting-be,' meditation on which will also be our conclusion. To let be, *lassen*, he said, may be understood in relation either to a being, or to its presence, *Anwesen*, or to its coming-to-presence as such, *Anwesen lassen*. The first of these meanings points towards a singular being and results from the attitude which "lets something be." Phrases like "there are peasant shoes," "there are corn and wine" and "there is a jug" show the familiarity of our language with this form of releasement. In the second sense, attention is drawn to that which makes things present, to their presence in general, to their beingness. To "let all things be" is to experience their presence for its own sake; Meister Eckhart said: it is to experience the *iht* that is God in creatures. Heidegger writes one word, *Anwesenlassen* and emphasizes the *Anwesen*.–These two meanings signify the ontological difference between beings and their beingness as occidental philosophy is accustomed to think it.

In the third acceptation of 'letting-be', Heidegger hyphenates the word *Anwesen-lassen* in order to emphasize the *Lassen*. This is releasement in its non-metaphysical sense. The difference that is now thought of is between Being and beingness (*wesene* as accomplishment and *iht* in Meister Eckhart and *Sein* and *Seiendheit* in Heidegger). Being is understood as letting beingness be. This letting-be is already hidden in the *Wesen* of *Anwesen*, it is, Heidegger said in Le Thor, the "excess of presence."

In the important lecture, 'Time and Being' (1962), Heidegger asked what is thought of when we say "there is Being." The German language does not say "there is," but rather "it gives," *es gibt Sein*. This idiomatic turn of speech reveals to Heidegger Being's way to be. What is experienced when one says *es gibt Sein?* What is given? Being is given. But what is it that gives? "We try to bring the 'It' and its giving into sight and write the 'It' with a capital letter."[70]

"There is Being." Traditionally, philosophy considers Being as the presence of beings (beingness). But what makes the presence come to presence? Our task consists of thinking that which gives presence. 'It' allows for presence, grants presence. It lets presence open up beings. It brings beings into unconcealedness, into Being. To 'give' and to 'let' mean the same phenomenon: 'It' gives, 'It' lets.

[70] Martin Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*. Tübingen, 1969, p. 5.

As long as Being is represented as the ground and foundation of beings, to speak about the 'It' that gives remains as mythological as an unmoved mover behind everything that comes to presence. The theologian will hasten along to detect an anonymous faith. This is not our intention in comparing Meister Eckhart and Heidegger. It is rather to follow their common enterprise of 'destruction.'[71] For both, neither beings nor beingness can answer as to what Being is. The equations "Being is beings" and "Being is beingness" are dismantled. Thus releasement shows its original way to be: 'It' lets beings be present and 'It' lets beingness be their presence. Such letting-be is Being. Releasement brings Being into its own.

What is it that gives Being? The verbs to let and to give say nothing about 'It.' However, we remember an early answer: *Geschick*, destiny or mittence. The history of Being sends us epochs as possible modes of existence. What is 'It' that gives, now? Destiny refers to Being and its history; thus the 'It' that gives Being appears to be Being. Releasement's way to be would now be: Being gives Being. But this does not say anything more than "Being is," and we remember rather that Being "is not." 'It' and Being seem to remain hidden within releasement as destiny and Being.

When the difference between beingness (presence) and Being (the being-given of the presence) is thought of, 'It' comes into sight as that which tolerates no name. However, 'It' brings Being into its essential difference, into its proper way to be. 'Proper,' the German *eigen*, suggests a belonging or appropriation, *Ereignis*. Unconcealedness is Being's proper way to be. But unconcealedness has appeared as what 'It' lets be. Being comes into its own as 'It' appropriates Being. Releasement, all of a sudden, turns into its contrary: appropriation. This turning, however, does not result from man's taking possession of anything, it is only the return into Being's original way to be. Releasement and appropriation, now, are names for one and the same event. But these names no longer refer to any attitude of man or to anything human. They interpret the phrases "It gives Being" and "there is Being." Only secondarily do they imply a claim made upon man's thought. This claim is what our initial quotations from the lecture "The Turning" and the course "What Is Called Thinking?" indicated (d and e).

The event–releasement and appropriation–is as different from Being as an *a priori* is from an *a posteriori*.[72] A third understanding of the

[71] *Ibid.* p. 9.

[72] *Ibid.* p. 33.

difference now appears: that between the event and Being. Each of the three modes of the difference mentioned must be thought of as modes of releasement and appropriation: beingness lets beings be present, Being lets beingness be their presence, 'It' lets Being be. Beings, beingness and Being come into their proper way to be. However, this process of dismantling is not a regression of hierarchical degrees. The inquiry proceeds towards a *neutrale tantum,* [73] not towards a more and more original ground. Heidegger traces these steps backwards from beings to the event that gives Being as follows:

> "Being by which all beings are marked as such, Being purports presence. When thought of with regard to what is present, the presence shows itself as letting-be-present. Now, this letting-be-present should be thought of properly, insofar as presence is released. Letting-be-present shows its proper way to be in that it brings into unconcealedness. To let-be-present means: to unveil, to bring into openness. In the core of unveiling there plays a giving. In the *letting*-be-present, this giving gives the presence, i.e. Being." [74]

Commenting on this text, Heidegger excludes the possibility of a gradation from presence, through letting-be-present, unveiling and giving, to appropriation. [75]

'It' is not, but 'It' gives Being; 'It' accomplishes Being properly. Nothingness and accomplishment were the two facets of releasement in Meister Eckhart, not-Being and event are the two facets of the 'It' that gives Being in Heidegger. Beyond all the incongruities that oppose medieval to contemporary experience, is it not the urgency of a new existence and thought, releasement, that brings Meister Eckhart and Heidegger close to each other? Heidegger is indebted to the mystical tradition when he thinks Being, not as reason or foundation, but in terms of an event, *Wesen* and *Anwesen.* Meister Eckhart attempts to think the vanishing of all reasons. A mode of thinking flares up in his German sermons that does not question man in order to know Being, but Being itself as a happening. In the silent desert of the Godhead, where no God and no man are there to confront each other, only the breakthrough 'is.' Eckhart came too early to succeed

[73] *Ibid.* p. 47.
[74] *Ibid.* p. 5.
[75] *Ibid.* p. 48.

in his daring design. He is not a modern philosopher. But his understanding of Being as releasement prepares the way for modern philosophy. The religious authorities of his age, although they could not follow his teachings, sensed a destructive power in his words. Today, this destruction has already taken place: the metaphysical God is proclaimed to be dead. Releasement can now be thought of otherwise than within the realm of man's experience. Meister Eckhart's thought is perhaps only about to meet its time.

ON MOVEMENT AND THE DESTRUCTION OF ONTOLOGY

I

Two problems continue to haunt Heideggerian scholarship and to pose needless obstacles to those who seek to enter his thought. One is the almost ritualistic repetition of the master's terminology—especially at its most manneristic—on the part of his disciples. Another is the tendency, which is found in Heidegger as well as in his disciples, to hypostasize "being" (*das Sein*) into an autonomous "other" that seems to function on its own apart from entities and from man. Both of these problems gather around Heidegger's key word *Ereignis* and therefore around his interpretation of the history of philosophy, and they obscure a clear insight into what he was trying to say.

In this brief and programmatic essay I hope to cut through the problems of terminology and hypostasization in order to show that the issue expressed in the word *Ereignis* is "movement" and that, properly understood, this "movement" is Heidegger's hermeneutical clue for "destroying" the history of ontology.

1. Concerning terminology: When it comes to doggedly repeating the master's most idiosyncratic jargon, Heideggerians seem to rival Lacanians in proving the truth of the French quip: *l'éruditonn est moutonnière*, scholars are sheep. This seems most evident when it is a matter of Heidegger's imagery (e.g., clearings in the forest, paths in the woods), which may indeed have come naturally to a man who lived in the Schwarzwald but which rings a bit false in the mouth of almost anyone else. Since Socrates, the impetus of philosophical thinking has been to clarify the real not by recounting sacred texts (*mython diegeisthai*) but by showing its meaning discursively in public language. If Heideggerians want to think for themselves rather than to become rhapsodes of Heidegger's texts, if they want to do philosophy—or even to undo it—then they would seem to have the choice either to keep on talking to themselves, or, like Gadamer, Pöggeler, Biemel and others, to engage in dialogue with contemporary thinkers in a language that both sides can comprehend.

To be sure, every thinker is free to forge his own technical language from out of his own discoveries. Throughout his career Heidegger struggled to separate himself from the shopworn terminology of metaphysics, with its grammar of substances and predicates, so as to say something which, both as

experience and as language, lay beyond the ken and the power of traditional philosophy. He sought a transformed relation to language, in part by trying to uncover the original Greek meanings of words that later ages had obscured. How all the more ironic, therefore, that his own terminology seems to have degenerated so quickly into a new scholasticism.

How then should we interpret the following statement by one of the most astute scholars of Heidegger's thought? "The greatest danger in speaking about a thinker," writes Professor Walter Biemel, "is that we will translate his language back into a language familiar to us in order to make it understandable. But what we really do is to mutilate what is proper to a thinker, because he is present and functions and lives in *his* language. His language is his thought, and if we give up his language, we give up his thought."[1]

Professor Biemel's statement in no way advocates a slavish clinging to the master's *ipsissima verba*, but rather poses the challenge of following out Heidegger's own and very original approach to philosophical language. That is, the uniqueness of Heidegger's technical lexicon does not lie in some supposed creation of neologisms or in some quasi-sacred terms that his followers are to preserve. Rather, the formation of Heidegger's language follows the two steps that characterize his reading of the whole history of philosophy: (1) a recovery of the Greek experience of disclosure (*phainesthai*) and (2) an articulation of what the Greeks missed in that experience, that is, what they implicitly knew and lived but did not thematize. In large measure, Heidegger's language is a recovery and a de-construction of Greek terms, and a retrieval of the experience that lies behind them.

Not to be aware of the unique relation of Heidegger's terminology to the Greek (a relation which always comports a retrieval) is to be virtually at a loss when it comes to interpreting Heidegger's key terms. For example, to translate Heidegger's *Gestell* as "enframing" is entirely to miss the relation of *Gestell* to the Greek *morphe*. Or to translate Heidegger's *Riss* or *Umriss* by the word "rift," as happens in "The Origin of the Work of Art," is to obscure the fact that those words are rooted in the Greek *peras*, the defining boundary between presence and absence. Most important is the word *Ereignis*, which I shall take up below. To miss its roots in the Greek *kinesis*—that is, in the retrieval of the unsaid in that Greek word—is to find oneself at loose ends when it comes to interpreting what *Ereignis* means.[2]

2. Concerning the hypostasizing of "being": From Heidegger's clearer statements one can see that being or *das Sein* is not some thing or event off by itself (as Aristotle says: *ou choriston on, Physics* B, 1, 193 b 5) but rather that it is only the disclosive structure of entities, distinguishable from entities but neither separate from nor reducible to them. When Heidegger says that his topic is being "itself" and not being as the being *of entities*, he is not pointing to some other phenomenon that lies behind and beyond the being (disclosive

structure) of entities. Rather he means he is searching for the analogically unified meaning of being that is instantiated in all cases of the being of this or that. The task of investigating being without regard to entities (as Heidegger sometimes formulates his approach) does not entail a search for something other than the being of entities. Rather, it simply demands a shift of phenomenological focus from *things* as disclosed to their *disclosive process itself* in its analogical unity.

However, there are enough texts in Heidegger that almost seem to make being into an "other" with a life of its own. For example, in a sentence that virtually summarizes his thought, Heidegger writes: "Being itself recedes, but, as this recess, being is precisely the pull that claims man's being as the place of being's own arrival."[3] Are we to read this sentence as the promise of a secular eschaton in which being will finally arrive and reveal "itself"?

Anyone who wants first of all to locate Heidegger's topic—what he called *die Sache*—before submitting it to criticism, has the task of deconstructing Heidegger's own language when it tends towards such hypostasization. Probably the best step would be to drop the word "being" altogether, because of its associations with Plato's *ousia* and all the transformations of *ousia* in the history of philosophy. Short of that, one must at least keep in mind that, when Heidegger speaks about the meaning of being (or, equally, about the time-character or truth or clearing of being), he is simply naming the analogical unity of the intelligible structure of entities, and not some super-thing that plays hide-and-go-seek with philosophers, revealing itself to some and hiding itself from others. Moreover, that intellibible structure is, for Heidegger, intrinsically kinetic, and it is bound up with the kinetic structure of man, which Heidegger originally called "temporality."

In short, Heidegger's topic is not at all some hypostasized "being" but rather *movement*. When, following the Greeks, he speaks of entities as phenomena, he means that their essence lies in autodisclosure (they "render themselves intelligible") and that such autodisclosive movement happens only in conjunction with the disclosive movement that is the structure of man. The correlation between the movement of entities (their being) and the movement of man (his existence) is the heart of Heidegger's thought and is itself a matter of movement. These reflections bring us to the word that expresses the core of Heidegger's thought.

3. Concerning *Ereignis* and movement: From 1936 onwards, Heidegger took *Ereignis* as the key word for spelling out his reflections on man, being and the history of philosophy. Usually translated as "appropriation," this term has continued to puzzle those who seek a clear insight into Heidegger's thought. In an effort to clarify its meaning, it is worth pointing out that the word did not drop out of the sky in 1936 but in fact began to emerge as far

back as 1928, specifically in a seminar on Aristotle's *Physics* that Heidegger conducted during his last semester at Marburg.[4]

For Aristotle, Heidegger points out, all natural entities are kinetic in an ontological way: their *kinesis* is their very being. A moving entity is one that does not fully appear (is not completely present) and yet does appear precisely in its incompleteness. We understand a plant as a plant, for example, only by knowing that its presence is fraught with absentiality: a not yet and a no longer, a coming into and a going from presence.

Such relative absentiality is what makes the entity *be* the moving entity it is. Therefore, to really know a natural thing means to keep present to mind not only the present entity but also the *presence of the absentiality* that makes it kinetic. The presence-of-its-absentiality (or its privative presence) is the moving entity's being-structure. We may call it "pres-ab-sentiality."

Aristotle's word for the pres-ab-sentiality of moving entities, according to Heidegger, is *dynamis*. This term does not mean "mere possibility" but rather "imperfect presence" or better "movement into presence." As Heidegger interprets it, the word means the same as *kinesis*. In fact in the 1928 seminar, Heidegger translated *dynamis* as *Eignung*, and *kinesis* as *Ereignung*, and he referred both terms, tentatively, to the word *Ereignis*, the event of an entity's autodisclosure. All three words bespeak the movement or appropriation into presence of what is not fully present, an entity's coming into intelligibility from out of unintelligibility. But it is crucial to note that the absential dimension of an entity's emergence into presence is itself present in its own way, namely, as *privative* presence, and therefore it can be experienced.

Aristotle's words *dynamis* and *kinesis* provided Heidegger with the raw material for his own term *Ereignis*. Whereas Aristotle held that, properly speaking, only natural entities, in contrast with artifacts, have their being as pres-ab-sential movement, Heidegger maintains that all entities, insofar as they are autodisclosive phenomena, have their being as movement (appropriation) into appearance. They may come from complete unknownness to partial knownness, or from confusion into clarity, or from forgottennness into remembrance. All these are modes of appropriation: partial emergence into intelligibility against a background of relative unintelligibility, in a word, pres-ab-sentiality.[5]

Without hypostasizing the being of entities, we can distinguish the presential and absential moments of the *disclosive process itself* whereby entities enter intelligibility. The presential dimension is nothing other than the entity *as present*, that is, the entity's usability, understandability, touchability. The absential dimension is that dimension of the entity's disclosure that is not fully present or knowable or controllable. In Heidegger's

terms, there is within the entity's autodisclosive structure a character of non-appearance (*lethe*) as well as appearance (*aletheia*), of un-appropriatedness *(Enteignis)* as well as appropriatedness into intelligibility *(Ereignis)*, of relative absence as well as presence. But those negative elements (which Heidegger called the recess-dimension or *Entzug*) still function intrinsically in the entity's autodisclosure, and they must be recognized in their privative presence. To know an entity as what it properly is, one must know the essential finitude of its autodisclosure.

When we turn from the structure of entities to the structure of man, we find that the issue is still movement. Since disclosure characterizes entities only insofar as they can be experienced by man, appropriation or autodisclosive movement is correlative with the self- and world-disclosive movement that makes up man's structure. *Being and Time* makes one overarching point: that man is present to entities only because he reaches beyond them in the direction of his own relative absentiality: his "becoming" (*Zukünftigkeit*) and "alreadiness" (*Gewesenheit*). The so-called three moments of temporality (presence to entities; futurity; alreadiness) in fact reduce to two: man is present to entities by becoming-what-he-already-is, he has *access* to entities by being in *excess* of them. And this temporality is really a question of the movement proper to man, his own form of pres-ab-sentiality. The point is that the awareness of his own privative presence (futurity and alreadiness) allows man to know himself authentically and to know entities properly, i.e., in terms of their kinetic intelligibility.

Moreover, there is a correlation between the disclosive movement of man and the autodisclosive movement of entities. Man's transcendence (his relative absentiality) is correlative to the privative dimension of the autodisclosure of entities (*their* relative absentiality); and man's "return" from transcendence to worldly entities (his presence to them) is correlative to the positive dimension of the autodisclosure of entities (their presence). If man has access to entities because he is in excess of them, that excess in turn is correlative to the recess-dimension of entities. The interplay between access, recess and excess (in other terms: *aletheia, lethe* and transcendence) is the heart of Heidegger's thought, and there, as he says, *Alles ist Weg*, everything is a matter of movement.[6]

Everything I have said thus far is directed towards understanding how Heidegger reads the history of philosophy. I have attempted to cut through his language and to dissolve his hypostasizations so as to show that both his fundamental topic and his hermeneutical principle for interpreting the history of ontology is movement. Before applying the above to his reading of the history of philosophy, I wish to return to the sentence from Heidegger that I cited above. "Being itself recedes," he writes, "but, as this recess, being is

precisely the pull that claims man's being as the place of being's own arrival." Interpreted, that means: the autodisclosure of entities has a privative dimension to it, and, as privative, that dimension is registered in and evokes man's transcendence in such a way as to allow for the intelligibility of entities. Or: the analogical unity of the being of entities is their autodisclosive movement conjoined with, and indeed initiating, the disclosive movement of man.

II

In the Introduction to *Being and Time* Heidegger announced a threefold program that he filled out over the next fifty years: (1) the analysis of the kinetic structure ("temporality") of man, (2) the analysis of the analogical unity of the kinetic autodisclosure of entities (the "time-character of being"), and (3) a reinterpretation or "destruction" of the history of ontology so as to show that its hidden theme was always the kinetic structure of being and man. The unifying topic in this program was, from first to last, movement. And since the essential character of movement is the dimension of relative absentiality or privative presence, Heidegger's goal at each stage was to uncover and thematize the intrinsically "self-concealing" element in phenomena that was generally overlooked or forgotten: in man, his futurity and alreadiness; in the disclosive structure of entities, the undisclosedness (*lethe*, withdrawal, recess) that is intrinsic to their partial intelligibility; and in the history of philosophy, the unspoken theme of ontological movement.

Even the frequently misunderstood *Kehre* or "turn" in Heidegger's thought did not deviate from this project. Properly understood, the "turn" refers neither to a shift in Heidegger's language and style in the Thirties nor to the supposed emergence of a new topic, *Ereignis*, in his work, and certainly not to the abandonment of the overall project he set out in 1927. The "turn," rather, means overcoming the ignorance of appropriation. In a lecture course from 1920, Heidegger called this *die Umwandlung der Philosophie*, i.e., the transformation of one's philosophical awareness into an effective recognition of the privative dimension of disclosure and of the corresponding structure in human transcendence.[7]

The turn refers to man's recognition of the relative absentiality that is already operative both in his own kinetic structure and in the kinetic structure of disclosure but that is obscured by the natural attitude ("fallenness") and by metaphysics' concentration on the presentness, rather than on the pres-absentiality, of entities. In terms of the history of ontology, this means getting "behind" or "destroying" the categorial formations that define being as the presentness of entities (*idea, energeia, esse,* etc.) and thus getting "to" the

kinetic source of all such formations. In that regard Heidegger says that appropriation "gives" the various forms of presentness in metaphysics while itself remaining "hidden" in the double sense of being intrinsically privative ("self-concealing") and thus overlooked ("forgotten"). In a dehypostasized interpretation, that means: metaphysical systems have read the intelligibility of entities in terms of only one moment of the disclosive process, the presential, and have overlooked the other moment, the relatively absential, because it is inherently privative.

To take the turn and recognize this privative dimension does not mean to obliterate absentiality and to "see being" in some kind of secular beatific vision. It simply means waking up to the pres-ab-sential bivalence that constitutes the intelligibility of entities. In *Being and Time* this awakening was called "resolve": the acceptance of oneself as ordered to finitude and, finally, to the appropriation process. In later writings it is called *Gelassenheit*, letting oneself go along with the autodisclosure of entities. In brief it means personally re-appropriating the movement of appropriation.

Heidegger's vision of ontological movement is what guided him in his deconstructive interpretation of the history of ontology. The details of his individual analyses are well enough known. In what follows I wish merely to sketch out some elements of his reading of the pre-Socratics, Greek metaphysics, and fallenness.

1. Concerning the pre-Socratics: Heidegger claims that whereas the archaic Greek thinkers experienced the autodisclosure of entities in both its positive and privative dimensions, they did not thematize the privative dimension for itself. And probably they could not, because they were not explicitly aware of the kinetic correlation between the privative dimension and man's own transcendence. In Anaximander, Parmenides and Heraclitus, Heidegger sees the same topic addressed: the kinetic self-revelation of things (*physis-aletheia*) which always comports an essential element of privativeness (*physis kryptesthai philei*, Heraclitus, Frag. 123).

But while these thinkers knew of the *lethe*-dimension of autodisclosure, they did not investigate it for itself. It remained, so to speak, in their penumbral vision as they focused on the emergent, radiant entities that were the issue of this pre-ab-sentiality. Perhaps the very implicitness of the appropriation process is what constituted the beauty and enchanting naïveté of the archaic Greek world and made possible their celebration of the world in poetry, art and religion. They were "all eyes" and caught up in seeing the world as resplendently "there" without the mediation of subjectivity or anthropocentrism. But, for Heidegger, the emergence of man as the "measure of all things" in fifth-century Greece heralded the end of the

penumbral awareness of appropriation and the beginning of what would become metaphysics: the understanding of the intelligible world as a correlation between stably disclosed things (entities in their "beingness") and stably disclosive man (categorial-predicative truth).

2. Concerning metaphysics: For Heidegger, it was with Plato that the bi-dimensionality of appropriation (movement—into appearance) was forgotten, with the result that only one moment of it was seen, the eidetic appearance of entities as what they are: *eidos*. The *eidos* loses its reference to the entity's emergence into intelligibility and becomes instead that-as-which an entity presents itself for intellectual viewing and categorial statement by man. As the movement of autodisclosure drops out of the picture, any hope of grasping the corresponding kinetic nature of man is lost. Just as the intelligibility of entities is understood as stable appearance, so too man is understood as the one who can categorially fix entities in that stable intelligibility. Concomitantly, a new term emerges to designate the being of entities: *ousia*, presentness-in-reality. From Plato onwards, the history of ontology will only be a set of variations on the theme of *ousia*—an ousiology.

Although Aristotle effects a decisive shift away from Plato's emphasis on *eidos* and a certain recovery of the theme of *kinesis*, he does not, according to Heidegger, regain the archaic sense of kinetic autodisclosure. Movement in Aristotle is entirely for the sake of appearance and presentness (*genesis heneka ousias*: generation is for the sake of presentness-in-reality), so much so that the absential dimension of disclosure—*dynamis*—is not seen as intrinsically privative but as not-yet-in-appearance. Even though Aristotle gives priority to first *ousia* (that which is in *ousia*: existence) over second *ousia* (that *as* which something is in *ousia*: essence), nonetheless the controlling viewpoint is still presentness-in-reality. For Heidegger, even Aquinas' theme of *esse entium* and *ipsum esse subsistens* is only an existence-oriented modality of ousiology.

3. Concerning fallenness and hermeneutics: Forgetfulness of pres-absentiality does not have its source in some subjective defect of man, one that might be overcome by taking a good course in philosophy. Rather, the overlooking or forgetting of appropriation is due to the intrinsically privative (self-concealing) structure of disclosure. Thus man's fallenness or absorption in entities-as-present is a normal consequence of how phenomena are revealed. The fact that metaphysics thematizes the being of entities as one or another mode of presentness-in-reality and then traces that back to God, does not break out of fallenness but only elevates it to the level of a thematic science. Nor does one break out of fallenness by reading, say, *Being and Time* or Heidegger's essays on the pre-Socratics. Nor, it must be said, did Heideg-

ger ever promise a philosophical eschaton when being (or Being) would finally show up, wreck vengence on technology and calculative thinking, and restore the West to a New Jerusalem of meditative thinking.

Fallenness, according to Heidegger, is of the essence of man, it is one moment—the presential—in his movement. The point of the "turn" is to contextualize one's presential absorption in things by becoming explicitly aware of what one already experiences: the relative absentiality of oneself and of things. This is the force of "hermeneutics" in Heidegger: the thematization of what is already operative but overlooked. The motto for Heidegger's hermeneutical reading of the history of philosophy could well be Pindar's words, *Genoi' hoios essi, mathon*: "Become, in a reawakened consciousness, that which you already are."[8]

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NOTES

1. Walter Biemel, "Heidegger and Metaphysics" in *Heidegger, the Man and the Thinker*, ed. T. Sheehan (Chicago: Precedent Publishing Co., 1981), p. 168.
2. Heidegger does say that one is not aided in thinking about *Ereignis* if one relies on the Greek language: *Vier Seminare*, trans. Curd Ochwadt (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), p. 104. But it is clear from the context that he means that the concept of *Ereignis* goes beyond and deeper than what the Greeks knew about being. In other words, the point is to retrieve the unspoken in the Greek, as indeed Heidegger does in his essay on Aristotle (see footnote 5, below). I am grateful to Profs. Parvis Emad of Chicago and John D. Caputo of Villanova for help in clarifying these matters.
3. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 2nd ed. (Pfullingen: Verlag Günther Neske II, p. 368; see also p. 489.)
4. The seminar was entitled "Phenomenological Exercises: Interpretation of Aristotle, Physics II," although it actually dealt with *Physics* III. Heidegger's own manuscript, 53 pages long, is now in the Marbach Archives.
5. See Martin Heidegger, "On the Being and Conception of *Physis* in Aristotle's Physics B, 1," trans. T. Sheehan, *Man and World*, IX (1976), pp. 255–258.
6. Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 3rd ed. (Pfullingen: Verlag Günter Neske, 1959), p. 198. Cf. my paper "Heidegger's Topic: Excess, Access, Recess," *Tijdschrift voor Philosophie*, XLI, 4 (December, 1979), pp. 615–635.
7. See my paper "Heidegger's 'Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion,' 1920–1921," *The Personalist*, LX (1979), p. 312–324.
8. See *The Works of Pindar*, ed. Lewis Richard Farnell, 3 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1932), vol. III, *The Text*, "Pythian Odes," II, line 72, p. 56.

The Crisis of Reason: A Reading of Heidegger's *Zur Seinsfrage*[1]

JOSEPH P. FELL

> But isn't this all unfounded mysticism or even bad mythology, in any case a ruinous irrationalism, the denial of *ratio?*
>
> *Heidegger*
> *Zur Sache des Denkens*

Heidegger chose the medium of the "public letter" for several of his more important arguments. There are public letters to Emil Staiger, to Hartmut Buchner, to Ernst Jünger, to Jean Beaufret, and to William Richardson. The two longest and weightiest of these letters are the *Brief über den Humanismus,* addressed to Jean Beaufret, and *Zur Seinsfrage,* written to the German novelist and essayist Ernst Jünger. The letter to Beaufret has justifiably been analyzed in the Heidegger literature both frequently and at length. The letter to Jünger deserves more attention than it has received, for it offers one of Heidegger's clearest explorations of the relation of being to nothing and to nihilism. Here I propose to consider *Zur Seinsfrage* specifically with respect to its implications for what might be called Heidegger's resolution of the crisis of reason in the epoch of nihilism. My concern is twofold. First, to consider how reason is conceived in, and how reason is threatened by, the epoch of nihilism. Second, to consider how reason, including Heidegger's own reasoning, is *regrounded* or resituated by Heidegger. I am interested in showing that, and how, Heidegger "saves" reason from reason's apparent self-destruction at the hands of a tradition that terminates in nihilism. This implication of Heidegger's thought is easily overlooked if one takes his sustained critique of 'reason' (*ratio, Grund*), in the sense of the willing of a metaphysical ground, as a renunciation of reason as such. I believe that the motive of regrounding and revalidating reason is one which Heidegger shares with both Kant and Husserl. Heidegger's revalidation, however, requires a recalling of being as the "ground" of reason that is possible only through a thoughtful experience of nihilism which neither Kant nor Husserl was yet in a position to have.

I. Meaning and Place

In 1950 Ernst Jünger had contributed an essay on nihilism entitled *Über die Linie* to a Festschrift in honor of Heidegger's sixtieth birthday.[2]

Five years later Heidegger returned the favor by writing the letter to Jünger for a Festschrift in honor of Jünger's sixtieth birthday.[3] Both in *Über 'Die Linie'* (as Heidegger's letter was originally titled) and elsewhere, Heidegger acknowledges his debt to Jünger's article "*Die totale Mobilmachung*" (1930) and his book *Der Arbeiter* (1932).[4] Both authors are trying to come to terms with Nietzsche's pronouncements on nihilism, but in two very different ways: Heidegger takes Jünger to task for failing to realize that to get "across the line"—i.e., to pass beyond nihilism—one must "surpass" metaphysics. Playing with Jünger's title *Across the Line* by adding some punctuation to it, Heidegger's original title for his letter comes out to mean *Concerning "The Line."* In effect, this shift of meaning cautions Jünger that there is no chance of crossing the line dividing nihilism from a post-nihilistic epoch until we have thought far more carefully about the nature of the line itself. The basic task, according to Heidegger, is not to find a way to go forward, "*across* the line," but rather to think back to something that already is. This forgotten something that already is is a *place*. "The place gathers" (386). While Heidegger claims that what Jünger called "the line" is a line within this place, just what this place is and what it gathers are not made clear at first.

What sort of thinking, if it is not the reasoning of traditional philosophy and science, enables Heidegger to reach a place that is not apparent to reason and not apparent to Jünger? In a lecture given in the year preceding the letter to Jünger, Heidegger identifies this thinking as *Besinnen:*

> To venture after sense or meaning [*Sinn*] is the essence of reflecting [*Besinnen*].... Through reflection so understood we actually arrive at the place where, without having experienced it and without having seen penetratingly into it, we have long been sojourning. In reflection we gain access to a place from out of which there first opens the space traversed at any given time by all our doing and leaving undone.[5]

'Reflecting,' then, is that way of thinking which penetrates through the space of all doing—including the doing of reasoning—so as to experience a more basic place, which is specifically a place *of meaning*. This place is the 'world' in which things and events have been experienced by us as the things they are. Things are identifiable as the kinds of things they are when experienced as having a meaning or significance. Trees, hammers, human beings can be disclosed as what they are when the meaning (*Sinn*) 'tree,' or 'hammer,' or 'human being' belongs to them. Then they are real, definite *beings*.

Heidegger had shown, in *Being and Time*, how the disclosure of beings *as* beings—as having an identifiable and intelligible nature—depends on the human 'understanding' of their meaning. He had defined 'world' as a complex of meanings in terms of which things can show themselves as

what they are.[6] This place is a historical place, in which human beings have to 'take over' inherited meanings and take these meanings as a basis for understanding the things and events that happen to turn up in the course of experience.[7] So, to find things identifiable as we encounter them requires that we be able to take seriously the meanings we inherit. If we take what has been as lacking meaning, or as having had false meanings, then we lack any inherited basis for making sense of things as we encounter them. If we cannot count on a range of prior meanings as holding for the future, then it seems that we will either find things meaningless or have to invent meanings *ex nihilo*, on the basis of nothing—which is no basis at all. But how can one have confidence in the validity of meanings that have no basis, that are just invented? Such meanings would be purely subjective, relative, arbitrary.

This is just what is happening to us, according to Nietzsche. We have lost confidence in inherited meanings—they amount to nothing—so that in order to make sense of things at all we have to take ourselves as the arbiters of meaning (i.e., to *will* meaning willfully—arbitrarily—*ex nihilo*). We must own up to the fact that meaning is relative to ourselves. It has always been relative to ourselves, but we are only now beginning to realize this. This, then, is the "line" we have reached, which bears the name 'nihilism.' In *Zur Seinsfrage* it is called an "invalidating [*nichtigen*] nothingness." But, Heidegger says, "the semblance [*Anschein*] of invalidating nothingness" (410).[8] It *looks like* nihilism amounts to man's final realization of the real nature of the place (or world): a negating nothingness—i.e., a place that is empty of all inherent meaning, that negates the possibility of any "objective" meaning and leaves it to us to fill up the void with subjectively-willed meaning. The place is no-place. Because we do not already have a viable position, we must make a position for ourselves by subjectively pro-posing[9] it. Heidegger's term for all of the various ways in which modern man is provoked to make a position for himself by subjectively pro-posing is *Ge-Stell* (401), a term derived from the German verb *stellen*, meaning to put, place, stand, pose, set, regulate.

Ge-Stell is the inner nature of modern technology as a constellation of ways of setting, placing, positioning, posing, imposing, disposing, proposing, planning, and calculating—which appear as subjective and willful acts. We might think of *Ge-Stell* as "The Com-position"—i.e., the place that seems to be nothing more than a complex of human posits, a human set-up. Elsewhere Heidegger connects *Ge-Stell* with "the Greek sense of μορφή as Gestalt"—form or figure.[10] One can think of the epoch of technology as a subjective pro-posing and imposing of form, a making-conform that has forgotten its true place. This forgotten place—I will come back to this later—is a place of ποίησις. Ποίησις also has the sense of forming, but not by a willful, aggressive assault on the environment. It has the sense of an art that complies with, or defers to—and so lets things lie forth in their own configuration or conformation, that is, in their own proper, fitting, or appropriate place. Heidegger

is calling attention to the massive difference between two kinds of art: the 'poetic' art of letting things show themselves as they are by being attentive to them in their own proper setting, *versus* the modern, technological art or skill of imposing one's own will and plans and designs on things, disposing of them as one will. But these are not simply two different kinds of art, one of which follows after the other, one ancient, the other modern. Instead, the modern, technological art has its long-forgotten roots in the older, "poietic" art and is therefore indebted to an art it does not even recognize.

II. Displaced Reason

In the technological epoch, in which nihilism comes to the fore, what has happened to reason? The epoch of the *Ge-Stell* has its own characteristic conception of the nature and role of reason. This conception of reason is also a conception of meaning, because to reason is to *mean* something in certain sorts of ways. Typically, reason (*Vernunft, ratio*) judges by analyzing and synthesizing, adjusts means to ends through reflective deliberation, logically induces and deduces, and even seeks to ground or validate itself on some solid ground. To mean something in certain sorts of ways is, in turn, to think what it *is*. So reason in the epoch of the *Ge-Stell* means or intends beings in certain sorts of ways. Four passages in *Zur Seinsfrage* show just what these ways of meaning are:

1. "...a conferring of 'meaning' on the meaning-less" (395).[11] The context of this passage makes clear that what is meant is that the human subject exercises its "metaphysical power" by "stamping" a changeable, mobile world of things with the subject's own *Gestalt* or idea of a fixed being. Heidegger refers to Plato's use of the term *typos*, that which makes an imprint. For example, Nietzsche might be said to type or form the form-less by giving it the stamp "will to power," much as a typewriter *imposes* a fixed type on a wholly blank or type-less sheet of paper.
2. "...the conceptual language of the sciences....is frequently represented [*vorstellt*] as nominalism...." (405). This means that in recent times reasoning in the sciences commonly gets taken as imposing on the objects of science words that are mere empty name-tags. The word tells us nothing about the real nature of the things it names; it is only a way of giving a single tag to a number of otherwise-diverse phenomena that science finds it useful to try to group into a single set or class. There are only differing individuals—no real kinds or classes or types of beings. Again, this amounts to the willful imposition of a single, fixed form on a "mobile" world. Heidegger says that this nominalism is "ensnared in the logical-grammatical conception of the essence of language" (405). In other words, it sees the function of language as that of imposing on things a logic and a grammar that have nothing to do with the individual things themselves; they belong to the subject, not to the object.

3. "In which sense does 'being' appear when the point is to gain assurance about beings? In the sense of the everywhere and anytime confirmable, and that means representable" (397). The subject's thinking takes the form of "re-presenting" (*Vor-stellen*). Again, as in the term *Ge-Stell*, we find a term rooted in the German verb *stellen*. One sense of *Vorstellen* is to represent in the sense of present again—to present or make present in thought or idea something that is also and separately present in reality. This is a second or secondary presentation: the thing itself is somehow present in and by itself, but it becomes present a second time, in secondary form, when it takes the form of an idea or concept or a sense-datum. The secondary presentation, the idea, is 'true' if and when it corresponds to the way in which the thing presents *itself*, the primary presentation. But *Vor-stellen* not only has the sense of *re*-presenting or making present over again in thought; in the epoch of *Ge-Stell* its dominant sense is *pro*-posing or *pre*-presenting.[12] In this sense, the reasoning subject "propositions" the world by actively and aggressively proposing to the environment *a priori*, in advance of experience, the concepts, norms, rules by which the environment is going to be interpreted. This is a basic sense of 'reasoning' in the modern, post-Copernican epoch. Here the concept or idea is primary and the thing secondary. Thus for Kant the concept "legislates" in advance to the thing—categorizes things by laying a charge against them. I propose to the entire region of the sensible in advance, as a condition for the appearance of intelligible objects of real science, that the sensible must *conform* to the concept of substance, the concept of cause and effect, etc. Now in either case, whether the *Vor-stellung* is a presenting over again in thought or a proposing by thought in advance, there is a separation of the concept and the thing—the concept is *over against* the thing. Heidegger is going to question how basic this "over against" really is—even though it seems obvious that ideas and things are different in kind: ideas belong to the minds of subjects, while things exist in a separate, distinct realm ("the environment," "nature").
4. "....*ratio*...is by no means a fair judge. It resolutely shoves everything not comformable to *ratio* into the alleged morass of the irrational, which it has itself staked out. Reason and its presentings [*ihr Vorstellen*] are only *one* way of thinking and are determined not by themselves but by what has called thinking to think in the manner of the *ratio*" (388). Modern reasoning is only one mode of thinking, and not the fundamental one. The dialectical opposition reason/the irrational does not exhaust the field of thinking. The *ir*-rational connotes a departure from the norm of reason, and so presupposes that reason autonomously sets or pro-poses the norms for thinking. But what if reason were really dependent on a "deeper" or more basic way of thinking whose basic role has been forgotten? What if reason were, in terms of *Sein und Zeit*, a "founded mode" or "modification"[13] of thinking? What if a more basic thinking that has already happened makes reason possible in the first place? To remember this forgotten thinking would then be not to destroy reason or

to reduce it to "the irrational" but rather to recall its proper place, and so to secure it in its proper domain. Despite some dramatic assertions by Heidegger seeming to indicate the contrary,[14] Heidegger's purpose is not to destroy reason but to ground it in its true source or origin. Reason leads to its own destruction when it claims to be fully self-determining or self-grounding or self-legislating or 'absolute.' This *hubris* of reason in Descartes is fated to encounter its *nemesis* in Nietzsche. Ironically Descartes, not Heidegger, is the real enemy of reason, and the critique of the powers of reason from Hume through Nietzsche performs the essential service of exposing the groundlessness of reason's claim to be the absolute arbiter of what-is, of reality and truth. This critique prepares the way for remembering reason's basis in a thinking which already has been and which remains, playing an essential but hidden role. Most peculiar of all, this basic thinking has *itself* blocked access to itself, has deeply dissimulated itself[15] in the course of our history by falling into thinking of being as presentness. I shall come back to this.

To summarize the four sorts of ways in which reason means the being of beings: (1) Reason takes itself as source of meaning and confers its meaning on the meaningless. (2) Reason commonly gets interpreted nominalistically or logico-grammatically—i.e., as imposing on things a subjective structure of words, grammar, or logic that is foreign to the things on which it is imposed. (3) Reason is seen as a re-presenting or a pro-posing in which the thing is understood not in terms of itself but through the medium of an idea or concept that stands over against and stands for the thing, as 'representing' the thing or as 'legislating to' the thing. (4) Relegating all other thinking to the "irrational," reason has lost track of its origin in a prior and more basic thinking.

Gathering together the four ways in which reason means the being of beings, we can conclude that reason—its words, its grammar, its logic—appears to owe nothing to the world it reasons about. Independent of things, reason attempts to make things bear a meaning that is foreign to the things themselves. The being—the meaning and "ground"[16]—of beings appears not to belong to these beings themselves but to have a metaphysical origin: to be determined over and above and apart from beings by reason alone.

The consequence of this conception of reason in the modern period is the loss of the meaning of things themselves. Meaning or significance occurs, if at all, in the domain of the reasoning subject, or in the domain of the irrationally willing subject, and not in the domain of things. Thus, for Jünger, the worker, who is the contemporary subject, determines and manipulates what is and will be by what Heidegger calls "an assault on the actual" (402).[17] Things are not *themselves* intelligible, meaningful, significant, or valuable. The historical quest for the real nature of things terminates in a "skeptical relativism" and in the arbitrary manipulation of things for human ends. There is 'nihilism': i.e., where the being of beings themselves should be recalled, there is instead an "invalidating nothingness"—a nothingness that misses the original coming into

disclosure of beings.

Nihilism seems to be the final story only on metaphysical premises. What are these premises? (1) That being is to be understood as presentness; and (2) that being is a goal to be reached by a departure from the domain of things, by a transcending ascent to a separate domain beyond the process of things themselves (*meta-physis*). But what if the being of beings is what already has been and still secretly holds sway? Then the metaphysical and rational quest to reach the meaning of beings as a future goal, as a novel conclusion, would be altogether vain. The meaning of beings would be already there, rather than being locatable in an ideal future or rather than being altogether unobtainable. The task, then, would not be to arrive at it for the first time, but to remember it.

III. Phenomenological Chronology[18]

The question about being, then, is a question about time. The problem of nothingness in nihilism—the apparent absence of being—is then a problem of time. And the "crisis of reason"—reason's inability to disclose things as they really are—is a crisis in our understanding of time. How does time figure in Heidegger's letter to Jünger? We have seen that Jünger wants to cross "the line" or "zero point" of nihilism. And we have seen that Heidegger restrains Jünger: rather than simply thinking or planning ahead to a post-nihilistic future, Heidegger talks about remembering something that has been. So he writes to Jünger:

> ...instead of willing to overcome nihilism we must first attempt to turn into its *essence*. The turn into its essence is the first step, through which we leave nihilism behind us. The path of this turn into has the direction and manner of a turning back (422).

This "turning back" is not a restoration.[19] Heidegger is speaking of a surpassing of the oblivion of being, and of a surpassing of metaphysics, for the first time. Before we can go forward, beyond nihilism, we have to go back, into the hidden roots of nihilism. What we find when we go back will provide the means for going forward. Yet Heidegger is saying much more than that. True going-forward is *itself* a going back. Here we come into contact with Heidegger's radical rethinking of the nature of time, which is needed for full understandingof his letter to Jünger, but which can hardly be gleaned from the letter itself.

For Heidegger "the play of true time" is a synchronicity or contemporaneity of what has been, what is coming, and what is present.[20] Essentially, the three "moments" of time—past, present, future—"time together," rather than one after the other.[21] Heidegger sometimes expresses this by saying that what has been comes on out of the future.[22] Another way of expressing this is found in *On the Way to Language:* "Time itself, in the wholeness of its nature, does not move; it rests in stillness."[23] These are difficult sayings, and it is hardly surprising that

they should be difficult if what they seek to evoke has been in oblivion, deeply disguised. They are at the very heart of Heidegger's thinking. They provide an essential clue for surpassing the problem of nihilism and the crisis of reason. But it is far from easy to show how this rethinking or recalling of the true nature of time could resolve the problem of nihilism and the crisis of reason. What must be shown is that the "play" of time as a synchronicity of the moments of time is itself "the event of appropriation" (*Ereignis*). This happening of being, or coming to disclosure of beings as meaningful, hangs on a certain interrelation of word, idea, and thing. I want to turn next to this interrelation. There can be no adequate assessment of the nature and basis of reason without careful consideration of the interrelation of word, idea, and thing.

In the Heidegger literature there is sometimes a recognition that Heidegger is not out to destroy reason or logic but is instead intent on reaching back to their source. But I miss a coming to grips with just how this source really underlies reason and makes it possible. Until this is worked out, the claim that reason is grounded in being says very little. It is important, then, to ask: *in what way* are reason's ideas or concepts or representations grounded in (made possible and justifiable) by "the event of appropriation"? What specific sort of connection can be made between concepts and being? Such an inquiry must of course respect the limit Heidegger places on what is sayable; but this cannot be an excuse for failing to try to say just as much as it is possible to say about this vital issue.

The approach I am about to take may seem peculiar and uncharacteristic of Heidegger. As I proceed, it should be borne in mind that I am concerned to show the relation between propositional or assertive thought or speech—such as occurs in reasoning—and the initial truth or disclosure that makes such reasoning possible. In this inquiry, it should be remembered that Heidegger does not deny or preclude the phenomenon of agreement between assertions and actual states of affairs.[24] He seeks rather to show that it is not the primary locus of truth, and hence to show how the primary locus of truth (original disclosure) makes the truth, and the falsity, of assertions possible in the first place. In an important sense, then, Heidegger makes possible a *rehabilitation* of the "correspondence theory of truth" (but with, we shall see, an important qualification). It must further be borne in mind that assertions are composed of *words* and of *ideas* (the words found in a dictionary are defined by ideas) that refer to *things* (entities, events, states of affairs). Therefore my task is to show how the ideas and the words of assertions can 'correspond' to things, *if* the relation of words, ideas, and things to the primary locus of truth is taken into account. As A.C. Ewing has noted, "...the correspondence theory...does not give us much information unless we can succeed in defining correspondence, and unfortunately nobody has been able yet to give a satisfactory definition."[25] There has been no satisfactory definition because words and ideas appear to be *entirely different in kind* from things, hence not adequatable to or "matchable" with things. A consideration of phenomenological chronology may help us to locate a real and non-arbitrary relation between words, ideas, and things.

IV. Word, Idea, Thing

In the course of the history of philosophy, many theories have been advanced about the relation of words to things, of ideas to things, and of words to ideas. (I mean to include under 'ideas' here the empiricist—especially in Locke and Berkeley—use of the term, as equivalent to sensations or sense-data. 'Idea' and 'ideation' will thus cover both conceptual and sensory presentations.) It is a matter of trying to comprehend the relation of language to things, the relation of ideation to things, and the relation of language to ideation. To consider the hoary nominalism-conceptualism-realism controversy is to consider the relation of both word and idea to thing. To consider the rationalism-empiricism controversy is to consider the relation of idea to thing. To consider the idealism-realism controversy is again to consider the relation of idea to thing. To consider the psychologism-logicism controversy is likewise to consider the relation of idea to thing. To consider any traditional theory of knowledge—whether correspondence theory or coherence theory or pragmatist theory—is to consider the relation of idea to thing. To consider how matters stand philosophically before and after "the linguistic turn" is to consider the relation between word and thing. This threefold relation, then, of word to idea to thing is pervasive and central in philosophical inquiry, and has been so all the way from Plato and Aristotle to Quine and Chomsky.

It is a sign of Heidegger's breathtaking radicalism that according to him *all* of these controversies are conditioned by the "oblivion" of the appropriating event of being. They are conditioned by the oblivion of the event of being in two ways: (1) these controversies owe their very existence to the forgottenness of the event of appropriation, since to remember this event would render the controversies superfluous; (2) these controversies secretely trade on a disclosure already made by the event of appropriation—i.e., when they talk about ideas or things they do and have to treat these ideas or these things as already disclosed—otherwise there would be nothing to talk about. Since they are secretly trading on a real disclosure that has already happened, they are not in a position to claim that their inquiries will disclose the real nature of ideas or of things for the first time or to claim that their inquiries have shown that the real nature of anything is unknown or unknowable to us.

What mistake do all of these inquiries about the interrelation of word, idea, and thing perpetuate in common? What is the chief sign that they have one and all forgotton the event of appropriation? They are theories about *sequences* or theories of *priority*. They start analytically with a sharp scission—with idea and thing, or word and thing, or idea and word as separate elements or factors or components; the task is then to establish

which comes first, which conditions or causes or informs the other. I will mention three important examples in the modern period of this sequential and separative procedure and its consequences:

In *materialistic naturalism*[26] things (i.e., states of 'matter') are the sole causes, and ideas are effects or epiphenomena of matter. A main consequence is that an order specifically of ideas or of reasoning (*ordo cognoscendi*)—as in a proof in logic or mathematics, or even an argument in ordinary language—cannot be accounted for and cannot be taken as the order it is meant to be. There is only the order of efficient causation. This is a consequence of giving a one-sided primacy to material entities, to the point where the materialist philosopher's very own reasoning cannot be accounted for. Ideas contribute nothing. This position calls forth the Husserlian critique of naturalism.

In *idealism*[27] the contrary problem occurs. The real constitutive or formative entities are ideas or concepts, and material things are therefore only illustrations of ideas. The independence of material beings is only appearance, since these things are functions of ideas. The order of nature loses its independence and its contingency. This is a consequence of giving a one-sided primacy to ideas. This position calls forth the existentialist critique of idealism.

Both of these positions, materialism and idealism, are reductive, and therefore inadequate, attempts to resolve the problem presented by *dualism*. Because they fail, they leave dualism standing. In Cartesian dualism[28] both idea and thing are taken as real, but as essentially independent of each other. The resultant epistemological and ontological dilemmas are well known.

Epistemologically, to gain a guarantee that a real external world exists and corresponds to the subject's idea of it, there is required a knowledge of the existence of a benevolent God that is beyond mortal reach. This is the unacceptable price that has to be paid for the sequential method of starting with the subject's internal ideas as the only initial givens and attempting to arrive at the thing—the real external world—only afterward.

The ontological dilemma is the impossibility of accounting for any causal interaction between the immaterial mind of the subject and the material external world; it is impossible because mind and nature or body are defined antithetically. Having nothing in common, no medium of interaction is possible, by definition.

Cartesian dualism, then, fails to observe the necessary condition for either an epistemological or a causal interaction between idea and thing, or mind and nature. This necessary condition was already understood by Aristotle, Heidegger's greatest mentor. In *De Anima* Aristotle writes: "...interaction between two factors is held to require a precedent community of nature between the factors."[29] *This principle has the greatest importance for the understanding of the interrelation of word, idea, and thing. It places an essential limit on the methodological procedure of treating these three factors sequentially and separatively.* Unless these "factors"—word, idea, and thing—are seen to belong together from the

beginning, the entire relation of human beings to other beings will be fundamentally misunderstood, including the relation of reason to things. This means that one cannot start with word alone, or with idea alone, or with thing alone; there is an "initial inner union"[30] between them. This in turn means that when we think of a word alone, or of a sensation or concept alone, or of a thing alone, we are abstracting them one-by-one out of their prior or preceding unity. This in turn means that each of them in part owes what it is to the other two; none of them would be what it is without the other two. The difference between them is relative.

Now all of this is talk about the nature of experiencing, and talk about what Heidegger calls disclosure or revealing of beings in their being, or primary "truth" (ἀλήθεια).[31] And, in terms derived from *Sein und Zeit*, it is talk about "the existential a priori"—i.e., about a disclosure of beings that has "always already" happened prior to any attempted analysis or proof that thinks it will arrive at truth for the first time in the manner of Descartes; Descartes thinks in the First Meditation that he can simply treat what has been, prior experience, as unreliable and start over again in the present, *ex nihilo*. Here the "phenomenological chronology" evidently differs radically from the Cartesian chronology.

We can now see that this phenomenological chronology has four basic features: (1) there is a contemporaneity or "community of nature" of word, idea, and thing, but (2) this contemporaneity or unity is what already has been. Because it already has been, and remains as an unrecognized basis for our subsequent experiencing and knowing, therefore (3) it has made possible in advance our present experience of things; Heidegger's way of putting this is to say that what has been comes to meet us out of the future. But (4) this unified way of experiencing which already has been is a 'projection' of the future, an active anticipation. This means that the present is always enclosed within the past and the future—or that only out of a retaining of what has been and an awaiting of what is to come does the present happen at all.[32] There is no self-standing present.

It must next be shown how the contemporaneity of word-idea-thing relates to the contemporaneity of the three 'moments' of time: having been, future, and present. How does a thing come to be present, come to disclosure?

V. The Chronology of Word, Idea, Thing

The future is the "afterwards" of what has been, and it is in this future that things come into presence—into disclosure—for human beings. Reworking the old saying, "There is a time and a place for everything," we might say that there is one time, unchanging or "resting" in its nature, for every thing, and this time is the time of the place known as 'world.' This time is the contemporaneous interplay, in the presencing of the thing, of the afterwards and the before or already. Putting it more simply: all human experience of anything present is based on active an-

ticipation of the future or possible and at the very same time on a retaining of the past or already given. If 'world' is the basic 'there' or 'place,' this time-place is the continuous becoming-past of the future and the continuous opening-out of what has been into the future. This is the basic condition for any thing *being* what it is for us—being disclosed as a thing with its ongoing self-identity. To be disclosed as having an ongoing self-identity is to be disclosed as staying the same, perduring in its nature. But to be disclosed as staying the same or continuing to be, it must be both retained and awaited. In other words, it must keep coming on out of the future as it already has. In order to *be* present, it must keep on *becoming* present. This, then, is the basic chronology of the thing, locating the thing within a contemporaneous event.

We have yet to consider what the relation is between this chronology of the thing and the word, as well as the idea. How do word and idea help a thing to be disclosed as staying the same, or being what it is? Why does Heidegger come to the conclusion that naming is not accidental to the being of things? And going back to *Sein und Zeit,* why does he think that understanding, or grasping-in-advance, is not accidental to the being of the thing?

It may help to make sense of the role of naming and of ideation in the disclosure of the thing if we go back to the learning process of the child. (Such a recourse should not be regarded as trivializing Heidegger's thinking.) The infant is first confronted by what William James called "a blooming, buzzing confusion"—not by things. In the course of groping and grappling with this sensory confusion, he hears, primarily from parents, words spoken repeatedly. Playing with his speech possibilities, he learns to say 'chair' and table.' He points to a chair and says 'table'—but his parents say "No! That's a *chair*!" So he points to the chair again and this time he says 'chair.' "Yes!," his parents say. But then he points to another chair that looks very different from the first chair and innocently says 'table.' "No!," his parents say, "That's a chair, too." What is going on? He has to figure it out. The same word names two things that look quite different. How can that be? He is forced to figure out how two things can look different and yet have one and the same name. Eventually the "eureka!" phenomenon occurs: he gets *the idea* of chair-"what it means to be" a chair, as Aristotle would say.[33] (What I am here calling the 'idea' is not thought separately from the experience and then applied to experience; *the original experience is of the chair's own meaning*; the separation of meaning, as "idea," from the chair only occurs afterward, by abstraction. Then what has come later—the separate idea—tends to get interpreted as if it had been separate from the thing all along.) He *understands* how a whole series of things that can and do look relatively different may nonetheless have one and the same function: they are all designed to be sat upon. Now it becomes possible to call a chair a chair even though it looks different from any chair he has seen before. He can anticipate and await the future disclosure of chairs.

The name has played a very special role in this process of disclosure of chairs as what they are. The "genius of the name" is that it applies at one and the same time to the thing *and* to the idea. The word 'chair' means this chair itself, but it also means the nature of the chair, chairness. By referring to both at once, it holds together, in unity, the meaning and the thing meant by that meaning. The meaning chair belongs to the thing chair; the thing chair belongs to the meaning chair; the same word names both. Now it is important to note that it is in naming that both thing and meaning are disclosed together: to understand the idea is to experience the thing as what it is, and to experience the thing as what it is is to understand the idea. Thus name, idea, and thing are an original unity. To name it is to mean it and to mean it is to experience it as what it is. Let it not be said that this is a "linguistic idealism" in which the word determines the thing *a priori*. Because they arise together, they belong together: the name is not what it is apart from the thing; the thing is not what it is apart from the name; the idea is not what it is apart from the thing. There is a mutual interdependence—a mutual owing—such that each *is* in relation to the other two. This mutual interdependence is neither a simple identity of the two nor a simple difference between the two. Here we are beyond (or prior to!) both monism and dualism. This is crucial for the surpassing of the traditional controversies: nominalism vs. realism, idealism vs. realism, rationalism vs. empiricism, psychologism vs. logicism, correspondence vs. coherence. *Each represents an analysis of a prior unity; each has forgotten that prior unity; and only by forgetting that prior unity can it claim that one factor in that unity has priority over another factor.* In other words: the original disclosure of things is owing to a "community of nature" of words, ideas and thing. In terminology of *Sein und Zeit*, word, idea, and thing are 'equiprimordial'; it is not a matter of one of these things being present, then a second being present, then a third being present. For anything to be present, all three must happen together.

Take another specific experience of a specific kind of thing: the first experience of trees as what they are—of trees as trees. This experience is not a sensing. Nor is it the uttering of a name. Nor is it the thinking of an idea. It is all of these together. Neither a physical event nor a linguistic event nor a conceptual event, it is all of these—a "seeing-saying-thinking." Only if I sense a tree can I say and mean tree, but only if I say and mean tree can I sense a *tree*. Only if I sense a tree can I think tree, but only if I think tree can I sense a *tree*. There is a mutual conditionality of seeing, saying, and thinking,[34] a convariance or correlativeness of the three; no one of the three is 'absolute.' If one makes any one of the three absolute or occurrent independently of the other two, one has forgotten the event of being, the original happening of truth or disclosure. There has been 'disclosure' in the specific sense that there has been a *naming* of *beings* in their *meaning*.

A price has to be paid for the manner in which this primary disclosure occurs, a price we as 'mortals' have to 'resign' ourselves to paying. While we may go on using the terms 'word,' 'idea,' and 'thing' as if they were simply three utterly different kinds of things, nevertheless their mutual in-

terdependence or "correlativeness" in the event of disclosure tells us that we need to make a far-reaching adjustment in our interpretations of them. The word is not only a word; the idea is not only an idea; and the thing is not only a thing. Each retains its identity, and so is different from the other two—but not absolutely so. This has certain implications that may not be wholly palatable to us: the notion that language, or that ideas, are wholly independent of things has to be surrendered. And the notion that things, as disclosed, are "themselves" in the specific sense of being altogether free of language and ideas has to be surrendered. Thus, as 'mortals' our power to reach either a pure language or a pure system of ideas or a pure nature in itself has to be 'renounced.'[35]

VI. What is Named: the Possible Actual

Perhaps most clearly in *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, Heidegger has shown how this process of disclosure is grounded in a being-open for the possibility of the actual. The possibility of true and false assertions, he claims, ultimately lies in a free "being open."[36] In part this means that for true and false assertions to be possible, for the rational phenomena of agreement or disagreement of an assertion and a state of affairs to be possible, there must be a human understanding that *either* truth *or* falsity is possible: one must be open to both possibilities. But this rather obvious sort of openness for the possibility of being right or wrong, of confirmation or disconfirmation, is grounded in a more basic sense of openness. This basic sense of openness is the original happening of the experience of the expanse of time as thrown possibility. In this original experience, the human being senses itself both thrown into the expanse of time and also as holding itself over against the beings that come to presence in that time. Dasein senses itself as at once subject to temporal unfolding and over against the beings that occur in that time. Confronted at once by the given and the possible (the sense of the open future), Dasein has the fundamental task of correlating the actual and the possible: it is faced neither by the merely actual nor by pure possibility, but by "a possible actual"[37]—i.e., by *thrown* possibilities. Dasein's temporal project is a "rendering possible" of the coming to disclosure of the actual; the project is the "self-opening for what makes possible." (This is "the real happening of the difference between being and beings," which Heidegger will subsequently characterize as *Ereignis*.)[38]

This notion of the basic disclosure of time as the expanse of the "possible actual" provides the necessary clue for interpreting the child's encounter with things in the process of naming and how this grounds his subsequent making of rational assertions about things. In understanding the meaning of the name or word, the child projects ('understands') what *can* count as, e.g., a table or a tree. In this understanding, he is both "bound" by what already is, the given, and "free" in having by himself to project the meaning of the given: he envisages the range of characteristics this kind of entity *can* be if it is to be the sort of entity that is given.

Once having done so, he understands "what it means to be" that kind of entity: what the name really means is not simply an actual entity or a class of actual entities but more basically the *meaning* that makes possible the disclosure of any such entity as an actual table, for example. Being, Heidegger holds in *Being and Time*, is "meaning" and "ground."[39] The child grasps, in the process of naming, the difference between the meanings that make disclosure of the actual possible and the actualities themselves—the ontological difference—together with the belongingness of the meaning and the actualities to each other. If the meaning has to be projected in a "free" act in which the human being holds itself "over against" the actual and binds the actualities to this meaning, nevertheless this free act is accompanied by a sense of limitation in which one is open for what actually occurs—in which one lets oneself be bound to and by the actual: one subscribes to the thrown conditions under which the actual can show itself as what it really is. One lets oneself be bound "by the evidence"—by what happens to happen, by the possibilities that happen to become actual. Rational assertions, then, must defer to and accord with what is actually disclosed in order to count as true. There is *a deferential overstepping*. Heidegger holds that "what sets the standard for the assertion that points out is: the being, how it is."[40] What sets the standard, then, is not any rational system of ideas or any logical system of rules arbitrarily imposed on beings in advance. There *is* a standard—but it is the thing itself, as both meant and given in the open expanse of time. The assertion gets validated or disvalidated by the showing or non-showing of the actual. But what makes possible this validation or verification is the thrown projection of the meaning of that kind of actuality: a meaning at once indebted to particulars and transcending them. The totality of such meanings-that-make-possible is world.

Thus temporal disclosure—the coming-to-presence of beings—is grounded in world as the complex of meanings that give the possibility of the actual. "Reasoning about," then, presupposes the disclosure of the beings to be reasoned about specifically as actualized possibles within the world. World is the ground of disclosure of the actual and so, *a fortiori*, world is the ground of reasoning about the actual.

I turn now to the question of the implications of the foregoing for the resolution of the crisis of reason.

VII. The Place of Reason

After analysing several passages in Heidegger's letter *Zur Seinsfrage*, I argued that Heidegger finds reason displaced in the epoch of nihilism. It seems to belong no-place and so to be free to propose the nature of the place. But since nihilism only 'completes' the tradition of metaphysics, we have to say that reason is implicitly displaced throughout the entire history of metaphysics. In the epoch of nihilism this implicit displacement of reason comes out into the open, becomes explicit. In the modern, Cartesian period reason arrogates to itself the power and the

right to propose and legislate to beings their nature, their meaning and ground. In consequence there is a bestowing of meaning on the meaningless, the imposition on things of a subjective structure of concepts, words, grammar, logic; whatever is not in accord with this pre-presenting or re-presenting is relegated to "the irrational." Any sense of reason *belonging* to a place, owing its nature to a place not of its own making, is lost, apparently leaving reason free to calculate and to manipulate its environment for its own subjective ends, arbitrarily. So, in Nietzsche, there is an explicit and terminal disorientation: reason finds no meaning or ground to serve as an orienting 'center' or 'measure' or 'standard.' Where the being of beings—their coming into disclosure, into their own—should be, there is instead 'nothingness.' Because reason's own quest for a metaphysical absolute by which to guide and ground itself has led instead to nothing, reasoning comes to appear as sheer willing: reasoning then seems to be a mode of the irrational! Hence Jünger's dilemma: where can we go from here?

Heidegger responds by encouraging Jünger to reconsider where we really are: our place. The 'nothingness' arrived at by Nietzsche appears to be only an empty, invalidating nothingness—a nothingness that negates the being of beings. But this nothingness is in fact the "veil" of being. In other words, the appropriating event of being 'dissimulates' (*verstellt*) or 'expropriates' (*enteignet*) itself as nothing at all. What *is* appears to be only beings, only what is in some way present: for traditional thinking and reasoning, something *is* if it can in some way be made present, be made graspable or tangible, be made "here and now."[41] But the being of beings, as a condition for presentness, precedes presentness. It is the process enabling any coming-to-presence, a 'gathering'—an event, not a thing or set of things. When reason insists that what is can only be in the manner of things disclosed, it inevitably misses this event that brings things *to* disclosure in the first place. The 'reasoning' which insists that what is is only what can be made present must therefore defer to a 'thinking' that ceases to insist, that remembers and so defers to an event that has made the present possible. What has made present time possible has made possible the appearance of things as present *in* present time. This basic event is the coming on of what has been out of the future in which the human understanding of thrown possibility participates. The present is made possible by what is *absent* from the present, i.e., what has been and what is coming—what is coming on as it already has. While nothing present, it is far from nothing at all.

What is it that is coming on as it already has? It is the place, the original time-space of meanings (thrown possibilities) in which human beings 'dwell' but which lies in oblivion, dissimulated and forgotten. This is reason's true place or orienting site, called 'world' by Heidegger and subsequently called "Fourfold." It is a place in which word, idea, and thing occur together out of what has been, and only so are things disclosed as present.

Trees keep on coming into presence as what have been thoughtfully

named. There has already been an anticipative 'saying' of tree—i.e., there has already been a 'transcendence,' overstepping or 'ekstatic' thinking of world as the being of trees. In the terms of *Being and Time*, there has been 'understanding.' Understanding thinks the nature (or essence, or meaning) of things: the possibility of their actuality. To 'dwell' in the 'world' is to understand the nature of things—to experience things *in* their natures, as meaning what they are. This meaning is not momentary, or "here and now"—but it is not outside of time in the manner of an absolute or metaphysical ground. It occurs as temporal understanding, by way of simultaneous anticipation and memory. I pronounce the name 'tree' not primarily for the present but for what can be as it has been, for all possible presentings of trees. The name *stays* in two senses. It stays in the sense of gathering and holding what has been and what will be in unity: trees have been what they shall be and shall be what they have been, and so can be present *in* their abiding nature. But the name can stay or hold in this way only by itself staying the same. In this way the name makes it possible for an ongoing series of different things to appear as the same in nature: No matter how different, no matter where or when, they are all trees. *The name holds in unity the idea or meaning 'tree' and the trees themselves.* The name is thoughtfully proposed, not arbitrarily imposed; it is proposed in the process of attending to the trees, seeing what they are. The saying of 'tree,' then, is an attentive understanding. It defers to the very beings it oversteps, and oversteps the very beings to which it defers. In thinking the common nature of all trees, it overreaches them; but the overreaching and constant idea must nevertheless defer to and fit the trees that have happened to be. This deferential overstepping is the thoughtful 'saying' of what is. It is at once active and passive, both a making and a hearing, both a conceiving of what is possible and a sensing of what happens to happen. In terms of the early Heidegger, it is a 'finite transcendence'—a delicate balance or harmony of essence and contingency. In the terms of the later Heidegger, it is a "poetic saying"—an attentive making. The poetic 'work' is the 'world'—the understood place as a complex of interrelated meanings. Because the meaning is owing to the thing and because the meaning is *there*—in the world—rather than here, it is not subjective. Because the thing is disclosed *in its meaning*, the thing is not merely objective and so meaning-less. The thing and its meaning are both presubjective and preobjective. Therefore the inner/outer distinction is not basic. If meaning already belongs to things, it is not "inner" or "mental" meaning, subsequently to be imposed on an "external world." And if things are already disclosed within a world of meaning, they are not simply external objects, outside of thought and unqualified by thought. Thought and things already belong to each other. That is why, as in the correspondence theory of truth, ideas can "stand for" things and things can "confirm" ideas: there is a prior "community of nature" between them. Thought does not come to things for the first time when we reason *about*

things; it is already there, *in* things. *The thought (meaning) which is in things is the hidden bond between things and reason.* If the thing has already been thoughtfully disclosed, there is no question of the thought not applying to the thing or not representing the thing.

The open temporal place of meaning, world (or Fourfold), is the forgotten "ground" of reason, lying in oblivion. To remember it, then, is to resolve the crisis of reason, as it is to surpass nihilism and its invalidating nothingness. It is to remember that reason is worldly.

VIII. Placing Heidegger's Reasoning

It is only in the epoch of nihilism that reason appears to give way to the irrational. Heidegger repeatedly notes that nihilism remains in the orbit of the metaphysical tradition; Nietzsche does not escape this tradition, but brings it to its last stage by 'inverting' it.[42] The irrationality of nihilism is the mirror-image of the tradition's version of rationality. To 'surpass' nihilism is not to move from irrationality back to rationality, but to go back behind this distinction to its hidden basis, its true place.

It is evident that Heidegger himself reasons. He argues. He thinks logically. And he is quite aware that he is doing so. But is he not then, from a logical point of view, inconsistent, since he criticizes the dominance of reason and logic? One can, to a degree, understand him as reasoning about the limits of reason, as does Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which is a critique *of* reason *by* reason: reason's self-critique. Heidegger battles not against reasoning but against an allegedly free-floating and self-grounding reason, reason with a capital 'R.' There are passages in his work that show sympathy with Husserl's critiques of psychologism and of naturalism on the grounds that psychologism and naturalism undermine the very possibility of the validation of logical judgment.[43] Heidegger regrounds reason and logic, in the specific sense that 'reflection' (*Besinnung*) reveals the real place or site of reasoning as one not constructed by but rather presupposed by reasoning. It is the rational tradition itself that ungrounds reason by leading to the psychologism of Hume and the irrationalist voluntarism of Nietzsche. The claim for reason's absoluteness thus calls forth a corrective antithesis, *ir*-rationalism, but both the thesis and the antithesis remain foreground dialectical positions—alternative 're-presentations' and not an original thinking of what truly is. In Heidegger's terms, reasoning can be 'right' or 'correct,' but not 'true.'

The main point to be stressed here is that "reasoning about" something by re-presenting it or pro-posing something about it propositionally presupposes *a prior disclosure* of the thing that is being reasoned about. The re-presenting or pro-posing does not and can not disclose the thing for the first time.[44] 'Thinking' as 'remembering' is called back to this original disclosure, which already has been and keeps coming on to meet us out of the future. Any new proposals about the microscopic or submicroscopic predicates of trees, for example, make sense only if trees

have been disclosed as trees—as the "subject" *of which* these new predicates can br predicated. The new predicates cannot take the place of trees; they are *about* the trees. Scientific or rational analysis does and has to presuppose that there will be and have been trees as subjects for analysis, named as already named and meant as already meant. The name, idea, and thing 'tree' must keep coming on in unity as they already have, or else I have nothing—no thing—to analyze. My present rational analysis of trees is thus necessarily *placed in* and *owing to* a having-been that keeps coming on out of the future.

If I say that rational analysis 'presupposes' that there are trees, or sky, or rivers, or earth, what is the force of the term 'presuppose' in such a statement? The term 'presuppose' comes from the Latin *prae-sub-ponere:* to place under in advance. In the epoch of the *Ge-Stell, ponere* has come to mean to 'place' in the sense of subjectively to represent or pro-pose, wilfully to posit or im-pose. But Heidegger's "recalling thinking" remembers that *ponere* originally has the sense of ποίησις: to make in the sense of deferential making, a care-ful tending of and attending to things. To 'presuppose,' then, is basically not arbitrarily to suppose or impose, but to listen for and remember what has already been named, meant, disclosed—e.g., trees.

The *Ge-Stell* is the "zero point" of such listening and remembering: there is nothing to listen to. But Heidegger argues that the *Ge-Stell* dissimulates the *Geviert* (or 'Four-fold') in which the *Ge-Stell* is grounded. 'Four-fold' becomes Heidegger's term for 'world' or 'place.' In *Zur Seinsfrage,* Heidegger writes:

> The crossing mark [in Heidegger's term ~~Sein~~] . . . indicates the four regions of the Fourfold and their gathering in the place of intersection....Man in his essence is the remembrance of being—but of '~~being~~.' This means that the essence of man participates in what, in the crosswise cancellation of being, puts thinking under the claim of a more originative command [*eines anfänglicheren Geheisses*]. Coming-to-presence is grounded in the gift, which as such makes use of man's essence in it.... (411)

This passage is the climax of Heidegger's letter. Here the basic themes of his *Besinnung* come together in a compact, succinct, simple correlation. Concentrated in the one term ~~Sein~~ are the notions of being, nothing, nothing as veil of being; Fourfold, *Ge-Stell* as dissimulation of the Fourfold; and in his own copy of the first edition (1956) of the text, following the word *Geheisses,* Heidegger added the word '*Ereignis*' ("appropriating event") which, more than any other word, evokes the single and 'simple' guiding theme of his thinking.[45]

The passage says that the 'nothing' (crossed lines) of nihilism, which seems to be a mere negation of being or sheer absence of being, a crossing *out* of being, is really the *oblivion* of being, the forgetting of the

event of appropriation that needs to be remembered. Nihilism's sense of placelessness (disorientation) comes from insisting that unless being is present it does not occur at all: that what is no present thing is nothing at all. Nihilism must be faced and assented to insofar as it means that the metaphysical conception of being as a representable present ground of beings has proved to be empty: nothing at all. But present beings (e.g., trees), when we are attentive to them, point to their true but forgotten place—world or Fourfold—which already has been as coming on out of the future. Elsewhere Heidegger describes the nature of the Fourfold in more detail. It is the interplay of mortals, earth, gods, heavens; the four members intersect in, and gather, the thing. It is the open place of prior thrown-projective disclosure of things, and the surpassing of nihilism is possible only if and when we remember this place where we 'mortals' have already 'dwelled.' In other words, the crucial thing is to remember the concealed event of being: the world that has already been disclosed, as a gift, prior to and as a condition of our subjective willing, representing, proposing, imposing, reasoning about and calculating. To remember this prior and "presupposed" region of truth is to *reorient* ourselves to it and by it and so to overcome the *dis*orientation or sense of groundlessness and placelessness of nihilism.

But is this recall to temporal truth really enough to sustain reasoning? Reasoning is guided by the laws of logic. Do not the laws of logic need to be timeless truths (eternally present grounds) in order to hold sway, to be a valid guide both for thought and for things? Consider the logical law of identity. For Heidegger, identity is not grounded in a worldless metaphysical rule of thought or in timeless law, but in disclosure in ekstatic time: the actualization of a thrown-projected possibility. The original identity is a concordance of future and having-been: the emergence of oneness, unity, selfness, self-sameness, self-identity as the *ongoing arrival* of what has already been coming on. Therefore the original identity is not timeless but is a gathering-by-timing. This is a "self-uniting unity."[46]

The basic law of logic and of reason—the law of identity—is therefore grounded in the event of time. If this law thereby loses its alleged independence or self-legislated and "self-evident" character, there is a gain that amply compensates for the loss: the vexing problem of the applicability of logic to experience disappears. If logic is essentially the "holding sway" of identity—the "validity" of identity—*temporal experience is itself this holding-sway of identity:* the ongoing arrival of the self-same.

To be sure, Heidegger shows that traditional logic and logical reasoning have their start (*Beginn,* as distinct from true *Anfang*) in metaphysics, in a falling forgetting of being.[47] What this means, however, is that traditional logic is conceived as grounded in a being—whether an eternal Idea, or God, or the self-evident intuition of the Subject, or the Subject's willful proposal. To 'surpass' this traditional logic is not to destroy logicality itself but rather to remember the forgot-

ten place of identity, or "ground" of logic in the event of time. This is a regrounding rather than an ungrounding of logic: logic belongs to *logos*, the saying and laying forth of the self-same as the arriving of what has been.

If we regard the other basic laws of logic (the laws of non-contradiction and of excluded middle) as corollaries of the law of identity, then their fate is the same as that of the law of identity.

But we cannot overlook the fact that there is a price to be paid for this regrounding of logic. As a ground, the event of time is no absolute ground, no *fundamentum inconcussum* in the manner of Descartes. It is a "*play*-ground." It is a ground only so long as it grounds—i.e., only so long as the Fourfold-play happens, only so long as mortals and gods, earth and heavens play together. No logic beyond or behind this play guarantees or necessitates the occurrence of this play. Therefore the holding-sway of logic is owing to a contingency: that there happens to be this play-space. Nothing grounds this play-ground; here we bump up against the limit of intelligibility, an abyss, a mystery: nothing ascertainable. Further, this happening is the happening of "the ontological difference"—the difference between beings and their being (the difference between beings and the meaning-event of their coming *into* being). It is a limit on logic that logic not only cannot show this differentiating event to be necessary but that logic cannot adequately describe this ontological difference. Being and beings are not logically different in the sense of having different identities in the way that two things—say apples and oranges (i.e, apples and not-apples)—have different identities that are held distinct by the law of excluded middle. Beings and their being *interpenetrate* in such a way that neither is what it is without the other. Therefore we have to say that the event of the being of beings is pre-logical. But it is not anti-logical, for it is the coming on of the very basis of logic itself, namely the thoughtfully experienced self-sameness of future and having-been.

Granted these limitations, a ground that already has been and can be remembered, or is *there*, has an essential advantage over a ground that has to be speculatively posited by metaphysical thinking. That is the real force of a saying of Nietzsche's Zarathustra: "Never yet has truth hung on the arm of the unconditional."[48]

Let me conclude by summarizing the resolution of the crisis of reason to which *Zur Seinsfrage* points. A "remembering thinking" uncovers both the validating ground and the limits of reason. If things, such as trees, have already been disclosed by attentive naming, then there are these things to reason about; our reasoning has a real subject-matter. The word 'tree' and the idea or meaning 'tree' are not subjective or nominal impositions or fictions but the name and meaning of things themselves. Things themselves are not "things-in-themselves" grounded in an unconditional being but rather things as they come into presence in the Fourfold. Thus reason can and does have a real referent. But the very same disclosure which thus grounds and validates reason also limits the

power of reason.[49] If reason presupposes a prior disclosure by attentive and deferential "poetic" naming, in a union of name, idea, and thing, then reason must 'resign' itself to being a *dependent* power, deferring to a prerational (but not irrational) being that has already happened; reason cannot itself discover or invent the truth of things or create a world for itself. It is of this that Heidegger's letter reminds Jünger. Jünger, like the rest of us, needs to learn that true surpassing of nihilism is a remembering. This remembering thinks back through the nihilism that seems to leave reason worldless to the place of disclosure that first grants to reason the limited but real power it has. This remembrance chastens intellectual reason's rage to ground and shows to technological reason its fatally forgetful tendency to ravage the very place that makes technology possible. Therefore Heidegger endorses Jünger's assertion that in the epoch of nihilism "The entire planet is at stake"(387).

NOTES

[1]In its original form, a seminar delivered at the Collegium Phaenomenologicum, Perugia, Italy, on July 10, 1984.

[2]*Anteile: Martin Heidegger zum 60. Geburtstag* (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1950), pp. 245-84.

[3]"Über 'Die Linie'", in *Freundschaftliche Begegnungen: Festschrift für Ernst Jünger zum 60. Geburtstag (Frankfurt a.M., 1955), pp. 9-45.* Subsequently published as *Zur Seinsfrage* (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1956); included in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1967), pp. 213-53, and in *Wegmarken* (GA 9), pp. 385-426. All numbers in parentheses in the text refer to GA 9.

[4]See "The Rectorate 1933/34: Facts and Thoughts," trans. by Karsten Harries, *The Review of Metaphysics, XXXVIII,* 3 (March, 1985), 484-85.

[5]*Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1954), p. 68; tr. *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 180.

[6]Cf. *Sein und Zeit,* Sections 14-18, 32, 43, and 65.

[7]*Ibid.,* Section 74.

[8]Cf. note 41, below.

[9]The term is used by Thomas Sheehan in his translation of Walter Biemel's 'Heidegger and Metaphysics," Sheehan, ed., *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker* (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1981), p. 170.

[10]*Holzwege* (GA 5), p. 72; tr. *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 84. Hence J.L. Mehta translates *Ge-Stell* as 'con-figuration' (*The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger* [New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1971], p. 210).

[11]I have argued elsewhere (*Heidegger and Sartre* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1979], pp. 97-128) that Heidegger, against his own intention, came dangerously close to this conception of the relation of meaning to beings in *Being and Time.*

[12]Heidegger frequently plays on the ambiguity of the prefix 'vor-', which in the term 'Vorstellung' normally has the sense of 're-' but literally has the sense of 'pro-'.

[13]*Sein und Zeit* (GA 2), p. 80; tr. *Being and Time* (London: SCM Press, 1962), p. 86.

[14]E.g., *"Was ist Metaphysik?",* GA 9, p. 117; tr. in David Krell, ed., *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 107. In *Heidegger: The Critique of Logic* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977), esp. pp. 99, 113-14, Thomas A. Fay calls attention to the *polemical* aspect of some of Heidegger's more dramatic assaults on logical thinking.

[15]For Heidegger's use of the notion of 'blocking' (*Verstellung*) specifically as 'dissimulation,' see Fell, *Heidegger and Sartre,* pp. 46, 60-61, 65, 250-67 *passim*, 465.

[16]GA 2, p. 202; tr., pp. 193-94.

[17]Richardson notes that "Jünger's conception of Work is tantamount to Will-unto-Power and the worker is obviously man as such" (*Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963], p. 374).

[18]This expression is taken from *Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit* (GA 21), p. 199.

[19]The context requires that *Verwindung* be construed as "surpassing" rather than as "restoration." Cf. Mehta, *The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger,* p. 215*n*.

[20]Cf. *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (GA 12), pp. 201-202, on *"das Gleich-Zeitige der Zeit."*

[21]Cf. GA 2, pp. 434 ff., 482-83; tr. pp. 376ff., 416; *Vorträge und Aufsätze,* p. 183 (*Poetry, Language, Thought,* pp. 184-185).

[22]GA 12, p. 53; tr. *On the Way to Language* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 176: "...true time is advent of what has been."

[23]*Ibid.*, p. 213; tr. p. 106.

[24]See for example, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik* (GA 29/30). p. 497. Also p. 511, which shows that it is a matter of relocating *"logos, ratio, Vernunft"* in their true context: world.

[25]A.C. Ewing, *The Fundamental Questions of Philosophy* (New York: Collier Books, 1962). p. 63.

[26]An especially clear case is that of Hugh Elliot, *Modern Science and Materialism* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1919). This type of position is effectively criticized by Husserl.

[27]E.g., the conceptual idealism of Hegel, or the sensationalist idealism of Berkeley. It can be argued that Husserl's transcendental-phenomenological idealism also belongs here. For Heidegger's summary assessment of the pervasiveness of idealism and of its relation to realism, see *Grundfragen der Philosophie,* (GA 45), pp. 17-18.

[28]The classic, and most influential, case is of course that of Descartes, whose dualistic assumptions continue to prevail long after his attempted theological and psychophysical (pineal body hypothesis) resolutions of his epistemological and ontological dilemmas are discredited.

[29]Aristotle, *De Anima,* Bk. III, Chap. 4, 429b25. Emphasis added. Cf. Bk. I, Chap. 3, 407b17: ". . .for some community of nature is presupposed by the fact that the one acts and the other is acted upon, the one moves and the other is moved; interaction always requires a *special* nature in the two interagents." (Aristotle is here referring to the soul-body relation.)

[30]*Einführung in die Metaphysik* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1966), p. 91.

[31]I recognize that in *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 969). pp. 76-78 (*On Time and Being* [New York: Harper & Row, 1972], pp. 68-71) Heidegger qualifies his earlier use of the term ἀλήθεια by allowing that (1) it was not thought as unconcealment by the Greeks, and (2) it is not to be translated with the name 'truth.' I wish to note here only that (1) means only that the sense of ἀλήθεια as 'unconcealment' was more deeply hidden from the Greeks than Heidegger had earlier suspected; that (2), as the context makes clear (see the repeated qualification "*sofern*" ["insofar as"] on p. 76/tr., p. 69), means only that it has become necessary for Heidegger to shift his terminology in order to insure that ἀλήθεια is not confused with either 'correspondence' or 'certainty.' The notion of "primary truth" is by no means abandoned.

[32]GA 2, Section 68 (a).

[33]This account is, of course, quite incomplete. A full Heideggerian account of such cases of childhood learning would have to include the context of action, the child's projective understanding of its own temporal way of being as a human being, and its understanding of the distinction between its own way of being and the being of (a) artifacts/instruments disclosed in use and (b) non-artifactual or "natural" entities.

[34]Cf. *Vorträge und Aufsätze, p. 179 (Poetry, Language, Thought,* p. 181): "We have left behind us the presumption of all unconditionedness."

[35]In his Roy Wood Sellars Lecture (Bucknell University, 1984), Anthony C. Genova argued that thing, idea, and word have been the "paradigms" that have successively ruled in the history of philosophy. Claiming that there is not likely to be any further "paradigmatic originality" and that recent Anglo-American philosophy's attempt to give absolute priority to language is proving to be as much an impossibility as were earlier efforts to give absolute priority to thing or to idea, Genova argues for "paradigmatic reciprocity." "It might just be that the presupposition for a richer conception of philosophical truth—a conception that may not admit of the sort of exhaustion that results from the unlimited pursuit of a favored paradigm—would be a method of logically simultaneous determination of word, idea, and thing, keeping one's philosophical eye on all three at once, calibrating and coordinating so as not to lose sight of their mutual interdependence and interrelation." I find here, expressed to be sure in a manner entirely foreign to Heidegger, a certain affinity to the implicit characterization of the relation of word, idea, and thing which I find in Heidegger's work after ca. 1934. Still further confirmation might be found in the work of

another American philosopher. In *The Midworld* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982), J.W. Miller argues that idea and thing arise together, correlatively, in a 'midworld' of 'functioning objects' that is prior to the traditional subject-object distinction.

[36]GA 29/30, p. 492.

[37]*Ibid.*, p. 528.

[38]*Ibid.*, p. 529.

[39]GA 2, p. 202; tr., pp. 193-94.

[40]GA 29/30, p. 496.

[41]Hence, from *Sein und Zeit* forward, Heidegger's struggle is the struggle against *Vorhandenheit* (sheer presentness, presentness-at-hand) as a model for being. Cf. Heidegger, *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik,* (GA 26), p. 252: "Die Welt: ein Nichts, kein Seiendes—und noch etwas; nicht Seiendes—aber Sein. Also ist die Welt kein Nichts im Sinne des nihil negativum"; p. 272: "Die Welt ist das Nichts, das sich ursprünglich zeitigt, das in und mit der Zeitigung Entspringende schlechthin—wir nennen sie daher das *nihil originarium.*" World, then, as both Sein and Nichts, is the Sein of *Zur Seinsfrage.*

[42]See Heidegger, *Nietzsche* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961), I, pp. 233, 464-65, 586; II, p. 201.

[43]See Heidegger, *Frühe Schriften (GA 1), pp. 19, 63-64, 205, 327-28; Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit* (GA 21), Section 7 and *passim; Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs* (GA 20), pp. 28-33, 79-80; *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik (GA 26), pp. 150-51.*

[44]This is especially clearly and directly maintained by Heidegger in *Grundfragen der Philosophie* (GA 45), pp. 19-20.

[45]GA 9, p. 411. This is the sole entry made by Heidegger in any of his own copies of the published letter.

[46]Cf. *Vorträge und Aufsätze, p. 176 (Poetry, Language, Thought,* p. 178) and Fell, *Heidegger and Sartre,* p. 232.

[47]This is extensively argued in the course of *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik* (GA 26).

[48]Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke in drei Bänden* (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1956), II, p. 316; tr., W. Kaufman, ed., *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: the Viking Press, 1954). p. 164.

[49]Throughout his career Heidegger was concerned with the power-powerlessness (*Macht-Ohnmacht*) relation; there is not one without the other. Cf. GA 2, p. 508; tr., p. 436.

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